THE SHADOW ON THE GLASS

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BY

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Author of "The Underwood Mystery," "Out of the Darkness."

"Tho it abide a year, or two or three
Murder will out—this is my conclusion.'

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"We wonder who reads the mystery stories,"
so say the critics. Here are some that do:

Frank K. Dutton, M.D., my brother
Hermann Lemp, Inventor, electrical expert
John Guthrie Fairfield, Professor of Mechanical Engineering
Miles W. Sterrett, steel salesman, sales agent
Leo M. Doody, Commissioner of Charities, Albany, N. Y.
Henry M. Taylor of the Penn. R. R.

These are representative enough, and all friends of mine, so I dedicate this book to them.

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CHAPTER ONE

OVER THE TELEPHONE

IT must have been after nine when I entered the great dining room of the Ocean House. As a rule it was always filled but the hour was rather late for breakfast and the half a dozen people that were in the room seemed lost, among the several hundred tables. The head waiter greeted me with a smile, steering me over to a small table by the large bay windows. The order was taken at once, and after a glance around the room, I turned and gazed out of the window.

Below me was the sea, with the long stretch of beach, a beach that ended at Point Judith, many miles away. Though it was July, the sand looked cold under the hazy sky. As a rule, on a clear day one could see Block Island, with its white sand cliffs standing high above the water twenty miles away. But this morning it was hidden by a fog, a fog that stood only a few miles out at sea. The water was beginning to

roughen under the rising wind, and the fog promised to envelop the land in a little while. Not only was the sky hazy, but it promised rain. Already a few fishing boats were running to cover before the coming storm, the sound of the exhaust of their engines coming faintly to my ears through the closed windows. It did not promise to be the finest kind of a day for the wedding, which had brought Bartley and me down from the city the night before.

Weddings were, as a rule, more or less out of our line. But the daughter of an old friend of Bartley's was to be married, and he had insisted on his being present. Still I have the idea, that that invitation of Frank Rice's was not the only thing which had brought Bartley to Watch Hill. Not only would his coming please his friend, but it would give Bartley a few days by the sea and an opportunity to play some golf on the fine course at the Hill.

Though Frank Rice was much older than Bartley, yet the two men were warm friends. Perhaps it was their mutual love for books that drew them together. Not that Rice loved books for themselves, as Bartley did. Books to Bartley were something to make part of your life, something that opened up all of the past life of man. Rice, on the other hand, spent part of his great wealth in gathering together one of the

finest libraries in the country. A library filled with rare editions and manuscripts, and which he enjoyed only because he liked to have it said, it was one of the three best libraries in the land. As to the contents of his library, I am afraid he knew little about them, himself.

But Rice was one of the most lovable men I have ever met. Wealthy, yet his wealth had not been made by grinding down the poor. His shipping line went back to the War of 1812, and was known the world over. So far as I know, he was the first shipowner, and about the only one that instituted profit sharing among his seamen. Sailors considered it an honor to work for him, and he knew the names of almost all the men on his ships. In all, a kindly old man, who loved children, dogs and horses, in the order named. His wife had been dead for some years, and a daughter and a nephew were all the family that he had. And it was the daughter's wedding we were to attend at noon.

The waiter at length returned with my order, and I turned from gazing out of the window, to my breakfast. Even in the short time I had been at the table the fog had crept in, a heavy, damp fog that clung close to the ground and blotted the sea from sight. When I rose to go to my room, the first drops of rain were dashing against the windows.

When I reached the second floor of the hotel, and opened the door of our rooms, I found that not only was Bartley seated in a chair, with the usual book in his hand, but he was already dressed for the wedding. Though it was not yet ten, he was wearing his black cutaway and a dark tie. He smiled as I closed the door, joked a little about the early hour that I took my breakfast, then went back to his book. I read through the morning paper, then leaned back in the chair for the first smoke of the day, glancing at Bartley as I lighted my pipe. His book no doubt was one of the many items he collected, dealing with the unknown life and manners of the past. Once or twice, as his long nervous fingers turned the pages, a smile came over his face. Once he threw back his head several moments in deep thought. It was at this point that I smiled a little to myself, at the thought that came to me. Perhaps Bartley would have been considered the best-known criminal investigator in the country. Yet it was a hard thing to believe, unless you knew him well. His fine head, the hair touched with gray; the expressive eyes, the long nervous fingers, all told of the many hundred years of breeding that was in his family line. In a crowd he might have been taken for a professional man of the highest type, but never for

what he was. One glance would have told the student, the cultured man of books. But a glance would have told also, that he loved the open air and did not neglect the outdoor life for his books.

All at once, with a little laugh, he dropped his book on the arm of the chair. There was a quizzical smile on his face, as he turned to me.

"Do you think, Pelt, a man could walk up the stairs of his house into an attic, which was the only room he could have entered—an attic without a single window or any means of exit except by walking down the stairs again into the room filled with people—do you think he could go up to this room and vanish forever, no trace of him ever being found?"

Not knowing just what he meant, I ventured, "It looks fishy." My answer made him laugh and he replied:—

"Yes it does. Yet here is a little book I got from France the other day. It's an account of what happened to Jean Richer in 1786, or rather an attempt to discover what happened. He did the very thing I spoke about. He invited fifteen of his friends to his little house one night and went up in his attic to get something he wished to show them. The attic was the only room above the main floor, with one stairway to it, and no windows. When at the end of fifteen minutes

he did not return, the people went up to see what happened. They never found out. He was gone, vanished from the earth, so to speak. The only way he could have returned was by the stairs, and they led into the room where the people were. But they all testified that he never returned. They say they heard his footsteps above their heads for a while, then they ceased, and they went to look for him. They never found him. He had vanished."

It seemed about as crazy a yarn as I had ever heard, and I said as much, expressing wonder as to what happened to the man.

Bartley gave a little laugh at my tone, and shook his head. "No one knows what happened. The legal authorities of that day looked into it, thinking some one of the fifteen had murdered him. But every one swore that no one left the room, while the man was up in the attic. Fifteen people told the same story, that he went upstairs, and never returned, and there was no window that he could have gotten out of. Then the church got busy, I think in the end they decided that the Devil had carried him off. As no one could dispute them on that point, it seemed to get accepted. But I think—"

Whatever he would have said, I never knew. Suddenly at this point, breaking in on him, the telephone began to ring. He rose in rather a

bored manner and went over to the desk and picked up the receiver. I reached for the book he had been reading, and started to open it. All at once, the strange tone in his voice caused me to turn and look at him.

He was sitting on the chair, his head half turned toward me. Upon his face there was a very startled expression, as if he could not believe what the person at the other end of the wire was saying. In his voice was a doubting tone, that seemed to have a shade of horror in it.

"Yes," he drawled at first, the voice suddenly becoming crisp, "Yes, this is John Bartley; John Bartley, yes, I have that." Then came a long pause, in which I saw the red fade out of his face, and then flush back again. A pause that was broken by his saying suddenly "My God—Yes, I'll come away."

He placed the receiver back on the hook, and rose slowly to his feet, standing motionless a moment, without saying a word. I saw his fingers slowly open and close, and there was a queer look on his face; a look not only of surprise, but of horror. He turned to me, and for a second I thought he was going to speak, but he did not. Instead he reached for the telephone once more, standing several minutes with his hand on the receiver, silent, motionless. Then with a sudden gesture, he swept the receiver from the hook, and

called the hotel office. He got his connection at once and I heard him say:—

"This is John Bartley, Room 212. I want my car up from the garage in five minutes. No—not an hour, in five minutes, and I won't accept any delay. Have it in front of the hotel."

Again he placed the receiver back on the hook, and still silent, sank back in the nearest chair. I watched him in dazed wonder. Something had happened, but what I could not tell. As a rule, no matter what came, nothing ever startled him, he never lost his poise. But now he was shaken, I could see his lips close in a tense line, and his hands were trembling. He turned to me, and his voice was weary, though back of it was a stern edge, as he spoke.

"Pelt," he said, "That call came from Frank Rice's butler. He said they just found Rice dead in his library—murdered."

I gasped. Rice murdered, and his daughter's wedding was to be held at noon. I started to speak, but the look on Bartley's face stopped me. His voice was cold and crisp, as he continued,

"Yes—murdered. They want us right over." He paused, and all at once his voice suddenly broke. "That fine old man,—and his poor daughter."

In a second he got control of himself, and I saw his fingers close, as he brought his clenched

fist down on the edge of the desk, so hard that the flesh whitened.

"God help the man that killed him," he said slowly, like one taking an oath. And knowing Bartley—seeing the emotion that had overcome him at the death of his friend—I knew that whoever had committed the crime, would need the help that he had spoken of.

CHAPTER TWO

THE BUTLER'S STORY

TEN minutes later, we went out to the car, which was standing before the hotel. It had turned into a beastly day, damp and cold, with a fog now so dense that everything was blotted from sight. We could barely see the front of the car, and the cottages across the street had simply vanished. It was a damp cold fog, clinging like a great wet blanket close to the ground, that penetrated our clothes as if they were so much tissue paper. When we climbed into the car, it seemed as if we were alone in the world, and only a curtain of gray mist could be seen. It was silent, only the sound of the surf, starting to pound on the shore, and the incessant shrieking of the fog horn at the light house could be heard. Feeling absolutely depressed, I sank down into the seat beside Bartley.

As we started, I wondered how he would be able to find his way. The road could not be seen ahead of us, and seemed to have become a lost thing. But we drove at an astonishing speed, when one considered that he could not see where he was going. Down past the hotel we flew,

round a corner, then down a hill, crossing the electric car tracks. Then I knew we were on the street that led to the section of the Hill where Rice had his summer home. Bartley said nothing and I huddled down in the seat trying to figure out what we would find at the house when we got there.

Bartley had been to Rice's summer place several times. The house itself was on a point of land that jutted down into the still waters of the bay. A point of land having the bay on one side, and a little river on the other. There one found the summer homes of those who had been coming to the Hill for many years. Unlike most of the people that owned summer homes, Rice had for several years kept his place open the year round, spending his time between the Hill and New York. Why he had done this I do not know, and the strangest thing to me was the fact that a part of his wonderful library was housed at the Hill.

How Bartley was able to stop his car in front of the right house I do not know, for the fog seemed thicker than when we started. It was raining quite hard now, a fact that pleased me, for I knew it would cause the fog to break. We stopped at last, before the dim shape of a stone house, and a second later we were up the steps.

We rang the bell, and waited impatiently for some one to come. It seemed as if the door would never open. There was no response, in fact we rang several times before we heard some one fumbling with the knob. Then the door was flung open. For a second, the light in the great hall blinded me. Then I picked out an old man, who with tear-stained face looked searchingly at us. I could tell, of course, it was the butler, and it needed only a glance to see that the old man had gone to pieces. He gave one searching look at Bartley, then with a half cry said:—

"Oh, Mr. Bartley, some one,—some one has killed the master, killed him. What shall we do? WHAT SHALL WE DO?"

His voice broke. He leaned against the wall for support. He was an old man, with a kindly face, crowned with snowy hair. For many years he had been Mr. Rice's butler, and the relations between them were something more than that of master and servant. Tears were streaming down his face, and his hands were trembling, as he looked appealingly at Bartley.

Bartley did not speak for a moment. I saw his face soften, then he placed his arm around the shoulder of the butler, holding it there for a moment without speaking.

"Richards," he said, "It's very sad. Suppose

you take us into the little smoking room, and tell us what happened. Have the police arrived yet?"

The butler, remembering his position, started to lead us down the wide hall. He walked slowly and feebly. By the open door of the little room he paused and then led us in. It was a small room, off the great living room. Then, as if remembering the question he had been asked, he turned to us:—

"I telephoned the police a while ago. They said they would run right down."

He hesitated, as if not knowing what to say or do. Bartley placed a chair by his side and motioned for him to take it. I could see that he would have to be questioned, if we were to discover what had occurred. He was in no condition to give any information himself; sitting on the edge of the chair like a man stunned. So Bartley told him to tell us all that had taken place—where they had found Rice and when.

Even then, the butler was unable for some moments to speak, and it was only after Bartley had repeated his request several times that he seemed to understand what was wanted. Then in a low voice, stopping at every word, hesitating and repeating, he began,

"Why it was, sir, this morning, at maybe half past eight, Miss Faith asked me to tell her

father she was waiting for him to have breakfast with her. Mr. Rice, as a rule, ate alone at seven-thirty, but last night he and Miss Faith agreed to eat together this morning at eight-thirty.

He paused, his voice breaking at the thought, then added, "The poor—poor girl. It was to be her last breakfast with her father before she was married." We waited for him to recover, and he went on:—

"Mr. Rice, as you know, Mr. Bartley, has his library on the top floor. It takes in almost all the floor, except for a little office. His sleeping rooms, as you know, are on the third floor. I went to his suite and knocked. He did not open the door or say a word. So I knocked again, then opened the door, and looked in. He was not there."

"The bed had not been slept in?" asked Bartley.

"No sir, not touched at all. I wondered where he had been, so went to the top floor, thinking he might be there. But the library door was locked, and I could not find him around the house. The detectives said they had seen him in the room last night, but did not see him leave."

"The detectives," broke in Bartley in an as-

tonished voice, "What under Heavens do you mean?"

"Why, sir, we had two detectives guarding the presents. The wedding presents are very valuable, and were all displayed in the library at the top of the house. Mr. Rice had two detectives here, they came last night."

There was a curious look on Bartley's face. "Do you mean those men spent the night in the room with the wedding gifts?"

"Oh, no, sir. Mr. Rice said that was foolish. The presents were on the fourth floor, and the only way to get to that floor is by the elevator. One of them stayed on this floor, and the other spent most of his time between the second and third floors, watching the elevator."

"The elevator?" I asked.

Bartley turned to me. "Yes, Pelt. Not only are there the stairs leading to the various floors, but also an elevator. The stairs do not go to the fourth floor, where Mr. Rice keeps his manuscripts. The only way to reach that floor is by the elevator."

He turned to the butler. "You say the door of the library was locked?"

"Yes, sir, it was barred or locked all night."

Bartley gave a low whistle. I could see that he was upset over something. He turned to

me. "Pelt," he said, "Here is a queer thing. Mr. Rice seems to have been murdered with two detectives in his house."

I had no time to answer, for the butler was speaking again.

"When I got to the library, I found the door locked, no one answered. When I could not find Mr. Rice, I thought it was queer and went and told Miss Faith. For some reason she was afraid, and said we must try to get into the library. She talked to the detectives, and one of them said that the last time he saw Mr. Rice, he was in the library. We all went to the top floor and knocked again. No answer. We had no ladders long enough to reach from the ground to the windows—it's a matter of fifty feet—so we decided to chop a hole in the door."

"Who suggested that?" asked Bartley.

He shook his head. "I don't know, sir, maybe Miss Faith,—no—I guess one of those detectives. Anyway I got an ax, and he chopped a little hole and reached in, and finding the key was inside, he unlocked the door."

"The key was inside?"

"Yes, sir; it was. He unlocked the door, and we went in. The wedding presents were all on the long tables, untouched. But when we went in that little den, then—" He hesitated,

overcome by the memory of what he had seen, and the tears again gathered in his eyes.

"Yes," said Bartley softly.

"We—we found him on the floor, dead. There must have been an awful fight, for things were scattered around and the draperies had been pulled down. He was dead, his head all smashed in. An awful sight, sir."

Silence fell again, and in it, I could picture the scene and the horror of it. Then came Bartley's voice:—

"Windows of the room locked?"

"All closed but two, sir, but it's fifty feet or more to the ground, and I don't think that any one could get out of the room by either window."

"Was there anything missing?—though I don't suppose you had time to look."

"So far as I could tell, sir, there was nothing missing. Miss Faith did not bother to look, asked me to call you and get the police."

Bartley rose from his chair and walked down the little room, then back again, pausing at my chair. Suddenly the door bell rang, and with a startled air, the butler rose slowly and went out in the hall. After he had gone, Bartley said:—

"Pelt, this may be a simple crime, but I have an idea we will find a very mysterious thing. Rice did not have an enemy in the world; the

butler says that nothing is missing. If he is right about that door being locked then we will have all we can do to fathom how the murderer got out of the room."

He said no more, for there was the sound of voices out in the hall, and the next moment three men came in, followed by the butler. One I could tell was the chief of police, by the shining badge on his chest. He was the largest policeman that I have ever seen, well over six feet tall and must have weighed about two hundred and fifty pounds. His face was red and fat, flushed as if he had been hurrying. He was the first one to enter the room, the other two men following him.

One of these I judged was a policeman of some kind. He had the shifty look of a man who lived by his wits, and also a rather over-emphasized idea of his own importance, a thing I have often noticed in small office holders. He looked around the room with an important air, and his glance was suspicious as it rested upon us. If he had only worn a cleaner collar, and if the baggy black suit that hung over his thin frame had been pressed, I might have liked him better.

The third man evidently was connected with the police force, for after a glance at us he whispered something in the ear of the chief.

He was one of those unattractive men that you never notice, with a heavy figure, and yet with a keen face. I saw the chief nod, then he turned to the butler:—

"Who are those men?" he growled, with a gesture at us.

"Why," answered the butler, rather astonished, "They are friends of Mr. Rice,—one of them is Mr. Bartley, the detective."

Bartley's name evidently was unknown to the chief, for he half sneered:— "A detective, where from? This is a job for the police not a detective agency."

Bartley turned to him, but before he could speak the other police officer stepped over to the chief and whispered something in his ear. What it was I could only guess, but the look on the chief's face turned to one of interest. He turned, and half apologizing, said:—

"Mr. Bartley, Dunn says that you are a very well-known New York detective. Excuse that crack I got off about a detective agency. Are you in on this case?"

Bartley smiled, and told him how we had been called in. Then in a few words he informed him of what the butler had told us. The eyes of the chief grew larger and larger as the tale went on. When Bartley finished the chief introduced us to the other two men.

The one was the coroner, whom I found out later was a broken-down lawyer, with little practice. The other was the only detective they had on the force of the town, and his name was Dunn.

After the introductions, the chief asked Bartley if we had seen the dead man and the room in which the crime had been committed. He shook his head, saying we had just arrived at the house and that first we wished to hear from the butler what had taken place. The chief seemed a little ill at ease. It may have been the fact that he was in the home of one of the richest men of the Hill, or it may have been that he was not accustomed to dealing with serious crimes. Be that as it may, he stood silent for a moment, his eyes wandering round the room. It was Bartley's rule to allow the local police to take the first steps, they after all having an official standing which he did not have. But seeing that the chief did not seem to know what to do, he suggested that we go to the scene of the crime

This was agreed to, and we all followed the butler out into the great living room. It was a room that stretched almost across the house, with two great fireplaces that were on opposite sides of the room. Upon the walls hung many paintings, mostly pictures of the sea, and

it needed only a glance to see that they were valuable. But we did not pause to look at the room, but followed the butler to one end of it. Here we stopped, while the butler pushed a button that was before him.

At first glance one would not have said that there was a door before us, as the mahogony wall seemed to have no break in it. Still there was a little silver handle on the woodwork, which the butler grasped as he pushed back a sliding door. Then I saw the iron grillwork of the elevator, which was standing ready for us to enter. It was one of those self-operating elevators. First, you pushed the button and when the elevator came down to your floor, then you were able to open the door and enter. The inner door of the elevator itself you had to close, or else the machine would not start. We all entered, there being room for five. The butler closed the wooden door, and pushing the button that was marked —4—, the elevator began to rise.

It only seemed a second before it came to a stop, and the doors were thrown open, and we came out into a little hall, just a few feet wide, evidently a place from which to enter the large room. Before us was a half-open door, the panels of which were broken through a little above the lock. Silently, thinking of what we

might find within, we entered, Bartley taking the lead.

The room was a mammoth one, covering almost all of the top floor of the house. Bookcases filled almost every part of the walls, except at the large windows. Running the length of the room were many glass-covered cases, four feet high, through which I could see the collection of old manuscripts, and the fourteenth and fifteenth century first editions. This was the room in which Rice housed his library. The bookcases, and the glass-covered cases containing that wonderful collection of first editions which he owned. Along the side of the walls however, were three long tables, many feet in length, glittering with cut glass, silver, boxes and linen. These evidently were the wedding presents, which must have been very valuable.

I think I had been a little afraid that we might come upon the dead man. But there was nothing in this room to show that anything was out of the way. Only the long line of books, the cases through which one got a glimpse of the parchments, and the long tables filled with gifts, could be seen. All this I took in at a glance, but Bartley simply swept the room with his eyes and passed on to an open door.

The room, as I said, almost covered the entire top of the house. On three sides were great

windows with bookcases between them, but a few feet from where we had entered was a wall, and in it an opened space. It was to this space Bartley went. I saw him reach it, start to step into the next room, then give a sudden recoil. I saw his face whiten, and his eyes grow smaller, as he stood looking silently into the room while the rest of us watched him. I think we all knew what he was looking at, and I knew that back of his stern face, was grief.

In a second we reached his side, and stood looking into the room. It was not large, maybe twenty feet long and the same width. Directly across from me were two windows, one of which was open, but there were no curtains. They were laying in a tangled mass on the floor. A safe stood in one corner, its doors half open, and near it a tall bookcase. But these were not the things we were looking at, it was something else, something at which all eyes were turned.

There on the floor, nearer the window than the door, lay a still figure, that looked as if it had suddenly fallen in a heap. A figure with its head turned on one side in a queer position —with one arm outstretched and the other with clenched fist resting on the chest. A figure with white hair, still, silent, that did not move —that would never move. The master of the house, dead in the midst of his books.

CHAPTER THREE

THE MISSING BOX OF GOLD

IT was only for a moment we stood there. We were in a sense hardened to death, yet I heard a sudden "Ah" escape from the lips of the chief. It must have been trying for Bartley, as the dead man was his friend, and they had spent many hours in that room. But it was only for a moment that he stood silent, his face white, and his eyes sad. Then with a start, as if awakening from a dream, he went over to the body and knelt beside it.

The room plainly told that a struggle had taken place. The curtains had been torn from the windows, and were lying a tangled mass upon the floor. Over near the door, upon a tripod, was a great camera. The drapery that had hung over the door had been pulled down over the instrument. Two chairs were lying on their sides, while the floor was covered with papers and pencils, which had been swept from the surface of the desk. Evidently there had been a struggle, one that must have been terrific while it lasted. The door of the safe was

half open, but nothing seemed to be disturbed there.

For a second I had taken in the room, then turned to look at the figure upon the floor. It needed only a glance to see that the murder had been one of unusual brutality. The snowy white hair was stained with blood, and the skull was crushed in. It was not a pleasant sight to look at. Still there was work to do, and Bartley made a hasty examination, the chief kneeling beside him. At last they rose to their feet and Bartley's eyes went slowly around the room.

"Well?" asked the chief.

Bartley's eyes went down to the figure on the floor, then again around the room. With a little exclamation, he went over to the curtains which were lying on the floor by the windows. Stooping he reached for something on the floor, and when he straightened up there was a cane in his hand. He looked at it carefully, balancing it in his hand. Then he came back to our side.

"I judge there is no doubt how Rice met his death," he said. "One look at this room tells that there was a struggle, a desperate one. Those curtains were pulled down as the men fought back and forth. That struggle swept all over this room. You see the draperies at the

door were pulled down, the curtains at the windows also. The surface of the desk was swept clean. It was a desperate struggle, that lasted till the murderer reached for his weapon and in a rage pounded the life from his victim."

"The weapon?" asked both the chief and his detective.

"This cane," was the reply, extending it for us to see. In silence we stood glancing at the cane he held in his hand. It was a rather heavy thing, heavier than most men carry. In looks it was not unlike most canes that one sees. There was a great bulging knob and here was the only difference, for the head of the cane was stained with blood. There was no doubt this was the weapon with which the crime had been committed.

"But," asked the chief, his big eyes looking wonderingly around the room, "how do you think it happened?"

The detective Dunn, who up to this time had been silent, suddenly spoke in a little squeaky voice:—

"Suppose there was a man, waiting for him to come in; say, hidden behind those curtains. When Rice enters, he jumps out at him from behind the curtains, pulling them down." He looked at Bartley who half nodded. "That might be so, yet let's take it another way. I

think, Dunn, maybe you are right in thinking that the person who killed Rice was in the room, and was surprised by him. He might have been back of the curtains, he might have been kneeling at the safe. To me that open safe proves that Rice was not ready for bed. See, it's left just as we would leave a safe open. The murderer did not open it—far from it, it was open. Rice came in from the other room, say, saw the person in here and the struggle started. It must have been a desperate one. They struggled back and forth, from one end of the room to the other. This cane must have been standing near by and the murderer, finding himself hard pressed, seized it, and struck Rice. Then to make sure he was dead he hit him again and again in his rage.

"But how did he get out?" asked the chief.

Bartley turned to the butler, who was standing silent by the door. I had noticed that the old servant, after one quick glance at the murdered man, had never looked again. His face was not only white, but he looked sick.

"Did you ever see this cane?" he was asked.

Half shuddering, he glanced at it, even touching it, with trembling hands. He looked at it carefully, finally taking it and turning it over and over.

"No, Mr. Bartley, I did not," came the an-

swer. "I am sure it never belonged to the master. He had a few canes but never used them. But I am sure that this did not belong to him."

"Did you ever see the cane before?"

He was silent a second, as if trying to think, then shook his head.

"Mr. Bartley," asked Dunn, in that squeaky voice, "what do you think was the motive of the murder?"

Bartley did not answer him at first, going over to the safe and peering in the open door. Crowding near him, we saw that the inner door of the safe was locked, the thin sheet of steel resisting our efforts to open it. Bartley stood looking silently at it a moment, saying nothing. Then he went out into the library. Upon the long tables were the wedding gifts, the usual kind. Great stacks of snowy linen, rows of glittering cut glass, silver without number it seemed. Down the three long tables he passed, pausing only once. Then it was to look at a little mahogany box that stood in the midst of a mass of silver. He reached over and lifted it, then put it back. But apparently he found nothing to interest him, for the wedding gifts seemed untouched. Then when he came back to the door of the smaller room, he answered the question the detective had asked.

"I can't tell what the motive for the murder

was, Dunn. The safe was not touched. So far as I can see the wedding gifts are all right. If it was robbery there are a good many thousand dollars worth of things on those tables. I don't see any motive yet."

He paused, turning to the butler, who followed behind us, silent like a gray ghost.

"Richards, Mr. Rice has a secretary. Where is she?"

"You mean Miss Long. She does not stay in the house, sir. Mr. Rice told her she might like to have her mother with her this summer, and they stay at the Rhode Island, that little hotel on the bank of the river. She comes in about ten o'clock every day. I telephoned to her, after I called you, and she should be here very soon."

"She would have a list of those wedding gifts, and would know if anything had been taken," Bartley said, turning to the chief.

The chief was apparently out of his depth. He was the typical small town chief of police, whose work dealt with petty crimes. Confronted with a murder, he was all at sea. All he could do was to stand by and watch Bartley with interested eyes, as he went about his work. Still, there was one thing in his favor. He realized the crime was beyond him, and was willing to allow the other man to go ahead. We had in

the past dealt with police chiefs who would not do this. But this one seemed glad that some one of experience was to work with him.

His detective had the keener mind of the two, despite the fact that he was a rather queer looking chap and had that funny, squeaky voice. His eyes were keen, and they wandered again and again around the room. It was he that said:—

"Mr. Bartley, those detectives said the door leading from the hall into the library was locked, with the key on the inside. If so, the murderer could not have locked that door from within and got out, unless he got out of that open window." He pointed to the library window which stood half open.

Bartley nodded. We went over to the window and looked out. It was still very foggy, the fog clinging to the ground, hiding everything from sight. But I got the idea that it was going to lift in a little while, for it was raining steadily.

The window must have been at least fifty feet from the ground, which we could not see. It seemed impossible for any one to escape from that window, save for one thing. That was, about three feet under the window there ran a ledge, maybe two feet wide, that evidently ran around the house. But even then, the idea of

any one walking on that ledge seemed out of the question. There was no doubt, of course, that a clear-headed person might have done it. But I remembered the terrific thunder storm we had the night before, around twelve o'clock. The thought of any one walking on the ledge in the dark, seemed almost incredible. Still with the door locked, the key inside, the murderer had to get out of the room and the open window gave the only solution of his escape. But another thought struck me. If he did walk around that ledge what would he gain? He would still be on the same floor. The room we were in and the smaller one where the dead man lay, took in the whole top floor. I could not see what it could profit one to try to escape by walking around that narrow ledge.

I said that to Bartley. For some reason he seemed a little amused as he answered:—

"Well, Pelt, at the corner of the house, there is a heavy copper rain pipe, which I judge would support the weight of a man. If one reached it, it is within the bound of possibility that he could slide down it and reach the ground."

"Hell," said the chief in an amazed air. "It would take all kinds of nerve to walk that ledge in that storm last night. It rained for two hours, you know, around midnight. Think of

it, walking that two-foot ledge in the storm and dark, and then sliding down the rain pipe. Why one step meant death."

Dunn broke in on him:—

"But chief, that's the only way they could have got out. If that door was locked on the inside, there was no other way out. They could not lock the door and leave the key inside. They had to get out. That was the only way, and that's the way they did." He paused, and leaned out of the window to look at the ledge.

I saw a curious look on Bartley's face as he replied:—

"There is no use looking for any trace of a footprint on that ledge. The rain would wash that off. Let's look at the door."

The door had been broken through, just above the lock. It was a heavy door, and it must have taken some moments to cut through it. The key was on the inside. It struck me it was strange that it should have been necessary to lock the door, for there was a spring lock. When the door was closed, it would have been locked anyway, there was no necessity to have turned the key. I voiced this, and Bartley gave me a sudden glance and bent down to look at the lock. When he straightened up, I noticed that a keen look was in his eyes; he had evidently

struck something, though what it was I could not tell. But the very tenseness in his voice when he spoke, told that he was throwing off the shock caused by his friend's death. Again he was the keen-witted Bartley, intent upon his case.

"Richards," he said, "where are those two detectives?"

"Why, sir, they were down getting their breakfast. I thought that you would like to see them, so told them to have breakfast down in the serants' dining room."

"Get them up here at once," was the command.

The butler left the room for the elevator, and we all stood rather foolishly wondering what would happen next. I could see that the solving of the affair would rest with Bartley, for the chief was too perplexed to be of much aid. Suddenly he heaved a sigh.

"Mr. Bartley," he said with a grin, "This thing is way over my head. I hope to God you are going to work on it."

It was a sheepish grin, the grin of a heavy-set man, a bit bewildered. Yet the very frankness of it, suddenly made me like the chief. I could see that he was not only a slow-thinking man, but, like most big men in size, was not jealous. He was confronted with something that was too much for him, and was glad for help.

Bartley turned quickly, his face stern, and his voice was cold as he replied:—

"Chief, that man laying in the next room was a friend of mine, one of the finest men I ever knew, gentle, kind and charitable. No matter what may happen, no matter how long it takes, I am staying on this case. I will not drop it till the person that committed that murder is brought to justice."

Maybe he might have said more, but the butler came into the room followed by two men. I judged they were the two detectives who had guarded the wedding gifts during the night. One was a fairly oldish man, heavy-set, with a smooth face that did not show the greatest signs of intelligence. The typical detective of a cheap agency. The other was a tall, heavy, average-looking man, except for one shoulder standing quite a bit higher than the other. His eyes were keen and wondering as they glanced around the room. His name turned out to be Hall.

There was little doubt that they expected to be questioned regarding their knowledge of the crime. But the presence of Bartley seemed rather to surprise them. I presume they expected to see only the police, and when Bartley did the questioning instead of the chief, their wonder increased.

In response to his questions, of where they were from, and who hired them, the older of the two men, whose name was Wells, took a card from his pocket and a sheet of paper, which he handed the chief, who after a glance passed them to Bartley. It was a card showing that the men were detectives working for the King Agency of Providence. The letter was simply instructions to report to Mr. Rice, who would tell them what to do. He said in explanation that both he and Hall had reported around four o'clock the previous afternoon.

It seemed that Mr. Rice had informed them that he himself did not actually see any need for any detectives, but had promised his daughter he would have two guard the presents during the night. He had told the men that there was little need for them to report until about nine o'clock in the evening, and they were then to be on duty until sometime around nine the next morning. The men had not returned to the house till a few minutes before nine, when the butler had taken them to the library, showing the gifts, and also how to operate the elevator.

They had decided, that in so much as no one could get to the top floor except by the elevator they would stay in the hallway on the third floor. There were no stairs above there, and

they thought that with the elevator door open all would be safe, for the machine could not be started unless the door were closed. With it open, no one could reach the top floor.

"But," said Bartley, "You are not going to tell me that from the time you came in at nine the elevator never went to the fourth floor; that you two men were sitting there with the open elevator before you all that time."

The older of the two men shook his head:—

"No, sir, of course not. There was nothing to do for a while. There was a girl up-stairs for a while, a secretary, I think. Then the daughter took some girls up to see the things and about nine-thirty Mr. Rice came in with several men. The men went out in a few moments, and a young man, I think it was a step-son or something—"

The butler broke in on him:—

"I think he means Mr. Maxson, sir, the son of Mr. Rice's dead sister. He lives here."

"I don't know his name," the detective half growled. "I seen him around, a thin sort of a kid. He went up and was up quite a while, then he went down to the main floor, and one of those men that were with Mr. Rice came back and went up again."

"How do you know that, if you were on the third floor?" Bartley asked shrewdly.

"Why, we were not up there till about twelve o'clock. Mr. Rice told us that there was little need to bother much till he hit the hay. He fixed us up with some smokes and the like, and we hung around down-stairs."

"That man that returned, the last one, who was he?"

"I don't know. He was with Mr. Rice when he first went up." Bartley turned to the butler:—

"Do you know who it was, Richards?"

The butler looked surprised. "No, sir, I never knew any one came in. Mr Rice did bring several men back with him. He had a little dinner at the club last night, sir. I let them out about ten o'clock. But I was up-stairs, and never knew any one else came in."

Hall, who had said nothing, suddenly spoke:—

"He was a big chap, a heavy man, black hair, long brown coat, yellow hat."

"Did you see him again?" the chief asked.

"Not in the house," was the reply from Hall.

I saw Bartley give him a look, then he asked:—

"Where did you see him?"

"Well, we went out just then, to take a look around the house, get the lay of the land. Just

as we came around near the door, this man came out in a hurry."

"A hurry?" both Bartley and I asked.

"He sure was. Ran down the steps, ran out to the road, stood a moment looking up and down as if not knowing where to go. It was raining then, and thundering hard. He ran toward the stores down on the avenue."

I wondered if we had stumbled on anything, but Bartley did not seem to think it was worth while, for he continued:—

"And about Mr. Rice, when did you see him last?"

"Never saw him again. Last time I saw him was when we went up-stairs after he came in. He said that he would be in his library till about twelve, for us to go on duty then."

There was a wondering look on Bartley's face, and his voice had an astonished tone in it, as he asked:— "You mean to say that you two men never saw Mr. Rice again after you went up-stairs?"

They both nodded their heads. He turned to the butler:—

"How about you Richards?"

"Well, sir, I did. That is, I mean I talked with him a few moments after the men came in. I was in my room, sir, and he called me on the house phone, speaking about being sure the

windows were closed as a storm was coming. It was just after he came in."

Bartley's face wore a curious look. I could see that he was puzzled, yet what over I did not know. He turned to Wells:—

"What time did you men go to the third floor?"

"Oh, I guess it was about twelve, sir. You see, Mr. Rice had a feed put out for us down in the servants' dining room. Told us to eat before we went on duty. Hall thought that the two of us better not be off at the same time, and he went down first, about eleven-thirty. I went down and ate about ten minutes of twelve. Then we took the elevator to the top floor thinking maybe we better stay there."

"Was the door open leading into the room where the presents were?"

Hall spoke up. "No, sir, it was locked. We thought that Mr. Rice had gone to bed, in fact we even knocked at the door to be sure and tried it. No one answered, the door was locked. Then we decided that we might as well stay on the third floor. There was a wide hall there, with chairs and a couch while up here there were only two chairs. We knew that with the elevator door open, no one could get up here, so we went down and simply left the elevator door open all night."

"And you heard nothing all night?"

"Not a damned thing."

"When you tried the door in the morning, after the butler and Mr. Rice's daughter called you, what did you find?"

"Why, it was locked. The girl wanted the door broken in, so they got an ax, and Hall knocked a hole in the door. He then put his hand in, unlocked it, and we went in. We found Mr. Rice dead—that's about all we know."

Bartley was silent for a few moments. I saw Hall look around the room and then his eyes came back to Bartley as if asking who he might be. But he received no information, for the next second Bartley told the two men he was through with them.

The coroner, who had kept silent all the time, now spoke up, turning to the two detectives:—

"I will want you two men at the inquest tomorrow morning."

They turned to go to the elevator when Bartley suddenly asked:—

"Did that man you saw hurrying, the one that came in last, have a cane?"

It was Hall that answered:— "I think he did when he came in first. I don't remember if he had it when he went out. I mean that when he came in with Mr. Rice he had a cane, but he

might have taken it with him when he went out. Still I did not see it."

I gave a start, thinking of the cane with which Rice had been killed. I half expected Bartley to bring it out, and ask the detective if it was the one the man carried. But for some reason he did not, saying nothing. So after staying for a moment to see if there was anything else he wished, the two men went out. The coroner went with them, saying that there was no reason for him to stay any longer, and that he would call the inquest the next morning.

After they left, Bartley went back in the little room, and went carefully over every inch of it. Evidently he did not find anything for I saw him shake his head when he came out. Then he went to the open window and looked out. I knew he was looking at the ledge that ran around the building, wondering if any one could have walked around it, in the darkness. Here he spent several minutes, leaning so far out that I half expected he would fall. Then he came back to our side. He said nothing, looking at the case below him, as if he had never seen anything like it. There were only a few parchment folios there, the sheepskins dark with the ages, but the gay-colored letters of the texts still retained the freshness of the day they were made.

His next words rather startled me:—

"The monks spend a lifetime on a single parchment," he said in a musing tone. It was not what I expected and it rather surprised me. Then his mood changed. He turned to the chief:— "What do you think, chief?"

The chief slowly shook his head. "Not much. That was a bad job, a brutal one. Some one certainly messed up things, but I can't see why."

"How about that man those detectives saw hurrying away?" asked Dunn in an eager voice.

"That's worth looking into," was Bartley's reply.

At this moment the butler returned, followed by a young woman. A very beautiful young woman with dark hair, beautiful skin and a rather boyish figure. But now her eyes were red as if she had been weeping, and when she came to the door, after one horrified glance at the hole in it, she had to lean against the side. I judged it was the young woman who filled the place as librarian to Mr. Rice and acted as his secretary.

Bartley hurried over to her. I saw him place his arm around her as if for support. I judged that she was very near to fainting for her face had grown very white. But in a moment she got control of herself and I saw the color come

flooding back to her cheeks. She spoke in a soft, musical voice that broke:—

"Oh, Mr. Bartley, is it true that some one has killed Mr. Rice?"

He nodded, then spoke to her, but his voice was low and from where we were I could not hear what he said. Again I saw her face whiten, and she gave a quick glance at the open door of the little room where the body lay. A glance of fear and sorrow.

Bartley soon brought her over to us and introduced us, and then told her what he wanted her to tell us. Her story was simple and without any value. She acted more as a librarian than a secretary. In fact she was a graduate of a library school, and her duties were not only to catalogue the books of the library but also to inform Mr. Rice about them. Rice himself knew little about books, buying them more to make a great collection than anything else. I had thought that the bulk of his library was at the Hill, but she told us that most of his books were in his New York home.

The previous night she had worked till after nine, making a list of the wedding gifts and getting the announcements of the wedding ready to send out. It was to have been a simple wedding, with only the family and one or two friends present. She finished her work a little after

nine, and went to the hotel where she stayed. She had not seen Mr. Rice since around four o'clock of the previous afternoon. When she finished, Bartley suggested that she look the tables over and see if the wedding presents were untouched. She went down the long line of the tables glancing quickly over the gifts, returning to say that nothing had been taken. Bartley looked at her a moment and half smiled. Then he walked over to the table near the windows and went halfway down its length.

"What stood here?" he asked.

The girl hurried to his side, the rest of us following her. Bartley was pointing to the table. In front of his finger was a mass of cut glass and beside it a mahogany box. By the side of this box was a little empty space. The girl bent forward to look and I saw a trace of astonishment on her face as she suddenly bent lower.

"I judge," said Bartley in his cool voice, "That something stood in that little space. See, there is a faint line on the white linen as if there had been something that stood there."

The girl raised her eyes. In them was a look of wonder and her voice was trembling as she replied:—

"Mr. Bartley," she said, "that box there, has $5,000 in gold pieces in it. Mr. Rice gave it to

his daughter because she liked gold pieces. And, —" the voice broke in her excitement,—"there were two boxes."

"Two boxes," came the quick response.

"Yes, sir, last night there was another box just like it, that stood beside it. He gave her in all $10,000. The other box had $5,000 in gold in it. It was there."

She pointed at the empty space, then cried:— "It stood there last night, now it's gone."

CHAPTER FOUR

A MESSAGE FROM THE BEACH

FOR a second all we could do was to gaze rather foolishly at the table. The heavy face of the chief had a puzzled look on it as if he did not quite understand. A slight smile played around Bartley's lips and he was the only one that was not startled by what the girl had said. To me it seemed as if a motive for the crime had been found—a simple motive —the ordinary one of money.

The girl was unable to give us any information except what she had already told us. The gifts had been placed on the tables the day before and the two little chests of gold pieces had both been there when she left the room at night to go to the hotel. Of that she was sure, saying that she had noticed them as she passed the table on her way to the door. But now one was gone.

At this moment, the butler came to the door and informed Bartley that Mr. Rice's daughter could now see him. The chief had already sent for another man, and after telling Dunn to stay

in the room till he was relieved, we went out to the hall and entered the elevator.

The daughter's rooms were at the end of the hall on the second floor. The butler knocked at the closed door, and a man's voice told us to enter.

The room was a large sitting room, with many windows, the room of a person that cared for books and loved good pictures. These we did not notice for over in a great chair was huddled the figure of a young woman, a figure bowed in grief, whose hand was clasped tightly by a young man beside her. He was a clean-type young fellow, whose eyes met us honestly and eagerly as we approached. I knew at once it must be the young man she was to have married at noon.

As Bartley approached the chair, both the chief and I hanging back, the girl raised her eyes from the floor to his face. With a little cry she jumped up and ran to his side. Tenderly his arm went around her and he whispered something to her, something that caused tears to come to her eyes, tears which she bravely brushed aside.

As the chief and I were introduced, she gravely met our gaze. Though she had been crying, yet she was trying to bear bravely what had so suddenly come. A beautiful girl, not because of her features, but because of the keen intellectual

face she had and the softness of the brown hair. A girl of maybe twenty, trying to bear the shock of her father's sudden death. Her fiancé, whose name was Camp, shook our hands, but said nothing.

The situation was hard for us all, but for the young woman and Bartley it must have been hardest. He had passed many days in the house, the friend of her father, and the sight of him must have brought back many memories of those times. So for a moment nothing was said, till suddenly the girl burst forth:—

"Mr. Bartley, how—how could any one kill so kind a man as my father? Oh, what shall I do, what shall I do?" And her head went down on the arm of her chair. The young man dropped on his knees beside her and took her in his arms. Already I liked him.

Bartley's face was grave, but I saw his lips twitch. "Faith," he said softly, "I can not answer that question. But I promise you that it will be answered."

She raised her head, her eyes gravely meeting his. Silently for several long seconds she looked at him, as if asking a promise. Seeing what she wished, she suddenly nodded.

It was necessary to ask many questions but after it was all over, the information seemed of little value. She had spent the day before in

the final arrangements for the wedding. It was to have been a quiet wedding, with only a very few intimate friends present. The last time she had seen her father had been around five o'clock. He told her then to get to bed early, and said he would see her around eight o'clock in the morning. When the butler came to her and told her he could not find her father in the house and the bed in his room had not been slept in, she had become alarmed. At first she thought he might be in the library but the butler told her the door was locked and no one would answer. Then she had called the detectives, whose story we had heard, and with them went up to the library. The door was locked and though they pounded on it, no one answered. She became alarmed then and suggested that the door be broken through. Some one said that it might be possible to find a locksmith who could open it. But the girl would not wait. She sent the butler for an ax and when he returned one of the detectives made a little hole in the door, reached inside and unlocked it.

"The key was inside the door?" Bartley asked at this point.

She nodded and continued, telling how they had found her father. To Bartley's questions she replied that no one had touched or moved anything and that her first thought after she was

able to speak, was to have Bartley called, and also her fiancé, Odard Camp, who was at the hotel. The rest we knew.

In fact for a while it seemed as if she had nothing of value to tell us though she wished to aid Bartley all she could. But any fact that would throw light on the murder she did not have. When asked if she knew the men her father had given a dinner for at the club, she shook her head wearily.

"I think he told me," was the reply, "but I have forgotten, that is, all but Judge Kingland. He is one of father's old friends, one of the judges of the Supreme Court of Georgia. He would know the rest."

A long silence came after this in which the chief shifted his feet nervously. Bartley's face was stern, though whenever he glanced at the girl it softened. Suddenly he asked:—

"Faith, so far as I know your father did not have an enemy in the world. You never knew of any one that quarreled with him, any ill feeling of any kind?"

She shook her head slowly. Then a startled look came over her face and she turned to her fiancé. Bartley's keen eyes saw the look and he said:—"What just came into your mind, Faith?"

She looked half apologizingly at him as if

the fancy had been foolish, but when he asked the question again, said slowly:—

"Why," she started and then paused again, "It's foolish Mr. Bartley, but I was thinking of Donald."

"Your cousin?"

She nodded, Bartley turning to the chief and me to tell us this was Mr. Rice's dead sister's son, who lived with them, a young man of around twenty. He again turned to the girl. "What about him?"

She half hesitated, then went on slowly. "He had several quarrels with father, nothing to amount to much or serious. He wanted a larger allowance and when he heard father was giving me the gold pieces, it made him angry. He thought he should have had the same gift."

Remembering the missing box I gave a start. The interested look had come into Bartley's face also.

"Is that all?" he asked, noticing her face had suddenly flushed at some recollection.

Her cheek reddened under his gaze and her eyes dropped as she replied:—

"Why, about all, he—he—" she paused.

"Yes?" said Bartley.

"He said once that he thought I ought to marry him but I thought it was a joke as he did not seem serious. He never liked Odard. He

did say some rather foolish things yesterday about the wedding."

She paused again, and only when Bartley insisted did she continue:—

"He wished to have me invite some friends of his to the wedding. They were people I did not know and father got angry at him when he insisted. Donald lost his temper and said:—"You wait, wait till to-morrow; I will give your old wedding a jolt."

The chief gave a start and even I was startled. In face of what had happened, the words of the young man might make him trouble though I saw that the girl did not attach much importance to them. Even Bartley looked troubled and asked:—

"What did he mean by that, have you any idea?"

The girl shook her head, "No, I don't know what he meant. Donald always was in the habit of saying foolish things, talking about giving people, as he called it 'shocks'—but he never did. He talked at times rather importantly. But that was what he said last night and then flounced out of the library."

In his heavy voice the chief spoke for the first time:— "Where is that young man now?"

Suddenly, as if realizing what might be

thought of the young man's remarks, the girl cried:—

"Oh, I am sorry I told you. Donald is rather a burden at times but he never had anything to do with father's death. That would be wicked to even think."

Bartley smiled, "No one thinks he did, Faith, we wished only to ask where he was."

The girl's eyes became wider as she thought for a moment, then replied:—

"Why, I don't know Mr. Bartley, I have not seen him to-day. The last time I saw him was in the hall last evening, around ten or after."

It flashed over me some one had said the young man had been in Mr. Rice's room, the library, and that he must have been one of the last persons to see him alive. The same thought must have come to Bartley for he asked the chief to go out and find if the young man was anywhere around.

After the chief went from the room, Bartley tried to find out why it was that Donald had not liked her fiancé, but at last we all decided it must have been because Faith was to marry him. Evidently the young man was jealous. It was right after this that Camp turned to the girl.

"Shall I tell him about the letters, dear?" he asked.

Before she could reply Bartley asked quickly:—

"What letters?"

The young man flushed, replying:— "It seems foolish but we had some letters sent us. I had one, Faith two, all unsigned."

"What kind of letters?" came the quick question.

He flushed. "Foolish letters, saying that we must not get married and that we would be sorry if we did."

Bartley's face was a study. He had found more than he expected. Already in this house where nothing had ever taken place, there was something to be solved beside the murder.

"You don't know who wrote them?"

"No, sir. They were typewritten, a few lines only and unsigned. I can get them for you."

He went to a desk after the girl nodded, and took out three sheets of paper which Bartley glanced at and placed in his pocket. Then he asked when the letters were received and where, placing the dates in a notebook. Then silence again.

It was the young man that broke the silence, his voice trembling a little, his eyes filled with love as he looked at the girl.

"Mr. Bartley," he said, "I have told Faith that

it might be best if we were married to-day as we first intended, in the presence of you and another witness. I know this terrible affair is a shock but as her husband I can aid her far more than as her fiancé. She is all alone now, with no one to turn to and I thought—" His voice trailed away.

As the girl's hand stole forth to clasp that of the man, Bartley looked at them. His voice was tender as he replied:—

"Odard, when Mr. Rice told me you were engaged to his daughter he said, 'John, it's hard to lose your girl but it's nice to gain a son that you will love. I know of no man I would rather have Faith marry.' I think if he could speak now to us he would say that the thing she needs most now is you."

The girl's eyes were raised to Bartley and at his words they turned and met those of her fiancé. The look in them caused a lump to come into my throat and both Bartley and I turned our eyes away for a moment. When we looked at them again, his arm was around her shoulder. I could see that they had decided to follow Bartley's advice.

They would have spoken but the chief came blundering into the room. As he reached our sides he said:— "Can't find that fellow. They

saw him go out about seven this morning and no one has seen him since. He had a package under his arm."

My eyes met Bartley's, the same thought was in each—a package—and up-stairs was the place where a box with $5,000 should have stood. He was just going to say something when the butler came into the room, came without knocking, his eyes large, trembling as if he had run up the stairs. He paused by the door, leaning against it as if for support. He tried to speak, but though his lips moved he said nothing. We all looked at him in astonishment.

"What is it?" came Bartley's quick voice.

Again he tried to speak, paused, then stammered:—

"Why, sir, they just called up from the bathing beach—yes, sir, called up."

"Yes," replied Bartley, "what then?"

The butler was trembling with excitement and could hardly continue, but at last went on:—

"They said, sir, they said—" again he paused.

"What?" demanded Bartley impatiently.

"They said Mr. Maxson, sir, has been drowned."

CHAPTER V

A MOTIVE APPEARS

NO one spoke for a moment, for the butler's words had startled all of us. The girl gave one horrified look at the butler as if she could not believe what he said; then reading from his look that he had told the truth, turned to Bartley. Bartley was startled, I could see, yet the expression on his face was a strange one. It was a look that might have meant anything. Seeing that the girl was too horrified to speak, he turned to the butler himself.

"Was that all they told you? I judge they phoned you from the beach?"

The butler shook his head, then after a glance at the girl spoke: "No, sir, they called up and said he was drowned. Said he went in bathing down at the beach. The life guard saw him swim out till the heavy fog hid him, then heard him yell for help. He swam out to get him but never found him."

Bartley's face was a study for a moment, then he beckoned me to come over to the door. I went to his side.

"Pelt," he said, "this is strange news. It's very odd the young man should be drowned just when we wished to see him. You better take the car and go down to the beach. See the life guard and find out all you can about it."

I went from the room, walking down the stairs to the first floor and out of the house to the car, still standing where we had left it. The fog had almost lifted and the wind was rising, the little spits of rain dashing into my face as I climbed into the car.

The bathing beach was at the end of Main Street, the further end. Main Street itself, was the business section of the Hill, a street filled with little shops and stores. One side skirted the bay almost to the entrance that led to the bathing beach. Here I stopped the car and climbed out. There was a long bathing beach, though divided in two parts; one part was used by the cottage colony and was private; the other section was public. A large building where they rented suits, stood by the entrance to the boardwalk that led to the beach. There was no crowd renting suits this morning, in fact no one was around but a red-headed clerk, reading a flashy magazine and smoking a cheap cigarette. He was rather bored when I first spoke to him, coming to life when I told him what I wished. But he knew little at that. He had

seen Maxson as he passed down the walk to the private bath houses, and as he put it, 'wondered why any fool wanted to go in the water on such a foggy morning.' Thirty minutes before we got the phone call, the life guard had come rushing up from the beach, saying the young man had been drowned. Then he had called the house.

The next thing was to see the life guard who he said was down on the beach. I went down the long boardwalk past the bathing houses, long rows of weather-stained buildings, ending at last on the sandy beach. It was a particularly fine place to bathe. The long point of land, used once for a government reservation, ran for a mile or more out into Fisher Island Sound. On one side was the ocean itself; on the other, only thirty feet away, were the still waters of the bay. The beach was almost deserted, save for several children and the life guard.

Reaching his side, I told him my errand. His story was brief. Maxson had come down from the bathing house in his suit, stopping to talk with him for a few minutes. The water was not very rough but the fog made it impossible to see more than a few feet away. He thought nothing of the young man going in, for he knew he was a very good swimmer. After he had

been in the water about ten minutes, he heard him cry for help. It was hard to tell just where the cry came from, because of the fog. He swam out, hearing the cry once more but was unable to find the young man. After the fog had lifted he had looked again with no results.

I turned and looked at the sea. The surf was rising under the wind and the water looked black and oily. The dark threatening sky, still filled with wisps of fog, made it a cold and dreary picture. I shuddered as I thought of the young man, battling for his life, in the sullen sea. I turned to the guard. "What do you think happened?"

He shrugged his shoulders. "Darned if I know," was the reply. "The fellow was as good a swimmer as there is down here. Maybe he had a cramp. Maybe he was out too far and was swept round the point by the tide, out in the open sea." He paused, then added, "But I don't see why that should happen. He was a good swimmer, and that cry I heard was not very far out. I guess like all of them he had a cramp. I did all I could but it was too foggy out there to see anything."

A bit puzzled, I stood glancing at the water before me, where the white caps were already beginning to form, but I did not think of them.

It had come to my mind that the life guard was right. It was strange that the young man, an expert swimmer, should have been drowned—drowned in a sea that was hardly rough at all. Still there seemed little doubt that this had taken place—sudden cramps and death, before aid could come.

Turning away, I went back to the bathing pavilion and asked if I could see the young man's clothes. I knew that they would have to stay where they were till the coroner had seen them, yet there would be no harm in my looking through them. The clerk, after I told him who I was, took a pass key and went down to the bathing house which the young man had used. Opening the door, he told me to enter. The clothes were in a mass on the floor, just as they had been thrown. Evidently Maxson was a bit untidy in his habits.

The examination took little time for I found nothing in the pockets. There was no money nor even a watch, in fact nothing except a rather soiled handkerchief. Puzzled, I stood looking down at the blue suit. It was strange that in the pockets there should be nothing. Not even a knife, no watch and no money at all. Just why this was I could not see. Then another thought struck me, what about the package that the chief said the young man had when he

left the house? True, the chances were he had disposed of it before he came to the shore. But I asked the clerk who stood outside the door if he had seen any package in the young man's hands when he passed him on his way to the bath house.

To my surprise, the clerk said he had seen a package, but what it was he did not know. It was wrapped in a newspaper, a large square package, which he carried under his arm. More puzzled, I turned and swept the bath house with my glance. There was nothing there, as I knew, yet it seemed very queer. If he had the package with him when he came to the bath house, where could it have gone? Naturally he would not carry it with him into the sea. But it was gone, and with a shrug of my shoulders, I thanked the clerk and went back to the car.

On the ride back to the house, I ran over in my mind what I had discovered. The more I thought of it, the stranger it seemed to be. There was no doubt of the cry for help, there seemed little doubt the young man had lost his life before aid had come. It was rather odd his clothes contained no personal things, and above all the fact that the package was missing. One would have expected to have found something in the clothes, a bit of money, a letter or two and

the like. But there had been nothing and it seemed strange.

Bartley was waiting for me when I reached the house, appearing before I could get out of the car. He told me to drive around to the hotel and climbed into the seat beside me. As we drove along, I told him of what I had discovered. He listened without a word, though several times a little smile appeared around his lips. But he said nothing till we reached the hotel. Then as we climbed from the car, he simply replied:—

"Well, Pelt, we will go into that later."

I wondered why we had returned to the hotel but followed him to the desk. He asked the clerk if Judge Kingsland was in. The clerk was not sure but called up the room, returning to tell us that the Judge was out in the sun parlor.

We went out on the great veranda, which is one of the charms of the hotel, where for many miles one could get a view of the sea and on clear days pick up Block Island twenty miles away. To-day, however, the sea was dark and sullen under the rain that was now falling. The glass-enclosed sun parlor was at the end of the veranda.

There were only three people sitting there, two of them women, but over in an easy chair,

reading a newspaper, was the Judge. His face was the type one sees so often among our judges, smooth-shaven, with snowy hair. He seemed sixty at least. When Bartley stopped by his side and spoke to him, he looked at us as if wondering who we were.

Bartley told him his name, and in a few words, of the death of the man whose guest he had been the night before. It was a rather startling bit of information and the Judge's face expressed his surprise and horror. For a moment it seemed as if he did not believe it, but after a look at the grim expression on Bartley's face, he put down his paper and motioned for us to take two chairs near by. He asked no questions but waited for Bartley to tell why he wished to see him.

"Judge," he said, "both of us were friends of Mr. Rice, both loved him."

The Judge nodded, his keen eyes never leaving Bartley's face, but he said nothing.

Bartley continued, "I understand you were one of the guests of Mr. Rice last evening at the club and that later you went to his house."

"Yes," replied the Judge slowly, "I was, but there was really only a small party of us. There was Rice himself, Judge Landerson of Florida, Bishop Work, Randerson Billings the book-

dealer, and myself—all old friends of many years' standing."

I half smiled at the answer. It was rather a distinguished list, all men well known in various walks of life. If Bartley expected that any of these men knew anything about the murder, he would be disappointed. A newborn babe might just as well be suspected.

As if reading my thought, Bartley smiled at me, then asked:— "Judge, why did you go to Rice's house after your dinner?"

The Judge was thoughtful a moment, then half smiled:— "Well, sir, that was a combination of circumstances. To start with, he had suggested we should drink a toast to his daughter. Naturally the fact that I am a judge of the Supreme Court of Georgia, and my friend Judge Landerson a judge of the Federal Court, made it impossible for us to do that publicly at the club. And then," he half smiled, "there was our good friend the Bishop to consider. Mr. Rice did have something in his locker at the club and joked a bit about serving us. But nothing came of it although it was half presumed that later we would go to the house."

Bartley gave him a quick glance and said shrewdly:— "What did cause you to go?"

The Judge smiled again. "I see, Mr. Bartley,

why it is you stand so high in your profession. There was a little disagreeable incident that brought it about."

"What was that?" came the eager question.

The Judge looked at his hands thoughtfully, then threw them out in a gesture. "Well, sir, it was really absurd. You know that Mr. Rice picked up a very rare book some time ago. I can't say just what it was for I am no expert on rare books, but Billings congratulated him on securing it. The book cost him a pretty penny —thirty or more thousand dollars. I know little about it except that it was found in France, and while James Kent was trying to find out if it was an original, I mean the first edition, Rice stepped in and bought it. But actually it's more or less Greek to me, though Billings and the Bishop were talking about it."

It seemed Greek to me also. But Bartley, though for a moment he looked startled at the turn in the conversation, evidently knew what it was all about. Seeing my bland gaze, he turned.

"I think I know the book, Pelt. About six months ago Rice informed the book world that he had found a copy of the first edition of 'I sonnetti lussuriosi di Pietro Aretino.' These sonnets were written to accompany the engrav-

ings of Marc Antonio which were copied on ivory by Jules Romain. The work was published in 1525. The scandal it created was so great that all copies were destroyed and one man lost his head. It has been presumed that none existed but an agent of James Kent found a copy in France. Wishing to get the opinion of bookdealers, he foolishly did not buy it, and Rice stepped in and secured the copy. He had some trouble in getting it into the country, but the government at last allowed him to do so. Its value is great, as it is the only known copy of the original edition."

The Judge had listened carefully, *nodding,* "That's about what they were saying, but I was not much interested. After a while we stopped talking about the book and finished our dinner. That over, all at once—" He smiled.

"What?" asked Bartley.

"Who should come over to the table but James Kent himself. He was pretty angry. He accused Rice of being underhanded in buying this book, when his own agent had found it. Next he said that it was not a first edition anyway, and he got pretty hot before he finished. But Rice said that it was perfectly all right for his bookdealer to get it away from Kent's agent, who should have kept his hands on it when he

had the chance. And to prove that it was the right edition, he asked us all over to see it, Kent included."

There was a curious look on Bartley's face at this, but he said nothing, waiting for the Judge to go on.

"Well," said the Judge, "we went over to the house, I should say it was a bit after ten. He took us to his library on the top floor and brought out the book."

"Where did he keep it?" came the question.

"I am not sure, I think in his safe. Anyway he showed it to us. It was an old book printed in Italian, with a number of odd engravings." He paused, and the old Judge actually blushed. Continuing, he said "Maybe you have seen those engravings, Mr. Bartley, they were—well, they were about the strongest thing of that kind I ever saw. Rather bad, shocked most of us. In fact Rice himself said the only reason he kept it was that the copy was the only one in the world. Worth all he paid for it."

"What did Kent say?"

"Oh, he raved around a bit, said Rice had done him a dirty turn, but we all went out together a few minutes later."

"Where did Kent leave you?" Bartley asked.

The Judge gave a start, and a shrewd look at Bartley. "He did leave us, that's a fact,

turned back after we had gone a ways. Simply said good night and went back toward the house."

"Did he have a cane?"

The Judge thought a moment, then added slowly, "Come to think of it, he did. I remember he had one when we went in the house, don't remember seeing it afterward. Did not notice, you know."

"And he wore a black overcoat and a yellow hat?"

The Judge simply nodded, I could see he was curious as to why Bartley wished to know these details, but he asked no questions. We talked a few moments more, then asking the Judge to kindly not say anything about what he had told us, we left him.

I wondered what Bartley would do next but he simply led the way out to the car, and getting in we started down the road. In my mind was the story the Judge had told us and I wondered if it would be worth much after all. I knew who James Kent was, a wealthy broker with a great hobby for books, in fact he and Rice were often rival buyers at the sales. I knew also he had the reputation of having a bad temper but it would be absurd to think of him in connection with the murder. And just as I thought of this there rushed into my mind the picture of Bart-

ley silently handing to us in the little room where we found the body, a cane, it's handle stained with blood.

It seemed that Bartley sensed my thoughts, for he turned and looked at me a moment, saying:—

"It will have to be looked into Pelt, that's why we are going back to the house."

When we reached the house, we found a strange policeman on guard at the entrance, who at first did not wish to let us pass. Discovering who we were, he apologized and we went in. There was no one on the main floor and going to the elevator, whose door stood open, we went up to the library. Another policeman was on guard by the broken door, who after a word let us pass.

The secretary was at work by the window, and greeted us with a wan smile. There was something very attractive about her. It may have been the boyish figure, or the touch of personality she had. She looked very tired and dark circles were around her eyes. Evidently she had been making a list of the wedding gifts for many typewritten sheets of paper were before her.

Bartley for a moment did not ask her a question, instead he picked up one of the typewritten sheets and studied it carefully. Evidently

finding something that interested him, he took it over to the window as if to get a better light, we waiting his return.

Back at our side, he placed the paper on the desk and turned to the girl. "Miss Long," he said, "you remember that Aretino Mr. Rice purchased some time ago. Where is it now?"

At the mention of the book, the girl's face flushed but her eyes met his. "Mr. Rice kept it in the safe. He thought because of the engravings it better be placed there, besides it was very valuable. So it has been kept in the safe, though we expected to have it in a case later."

"Is it there now?" she was asked.

"Oh, yes, I saw it there yesterday."

Bartley motioned to us and we all followed him into the smaller room where the body had been found. The doctors evidently had been there and the coroner had allowed the body to be moved. The room even had been put in order, and the floor was cleared of the things which had been thrown there during the struggle which had taken place.

He swept the room with his gance, going over to the safe. When we had first seen the safe, the door had been half opened. Now it was closed but the secretary informed us she had closed it. In a second she had opened the safe

and, kneeling before it, reached in for the book. Her hands groped in the safe as if not finding the book where she expected it would be. Suddenly she opened the door wider to get more light, peering into the interior. After a moment, without getting up, she turned and looked at us.

Her face was a study of perplexity and it seemed to me to have even a trace of fear. Under Bartley's searching eyes she flushed for a moment, hesitated, then said:—

"The book is not there Mr. Bartley."

He was down on his knees in a second and there was doubt in his voice as he asked:—

"Not there, are you sure?"

She looked at the safe for a moment, then shook her head. "No, it's not there. It should be, it was there yesterday but it's not there now."

CHAPTER SIX

THE MYSTERY DEEPENS

FOR a moment, I thought the girl must be fooling but a look at her face, white and filled with fear, told she was not. Bartley himself looked startled, something he was able to hide as a rule. First the chest of money disappeared, and now the book was gone, a book worth about $30,000. Evidently we were going to have all the mysteries we needed.

After a moment, Bartley turned to the girl. "Miss Long," he said, "you are sure that the book should have been in the safe? Could Mr. Rice have placed it somewhere else?"

She replied earnestly:— "Yes. You see it was very valuable, and there was no place for it in the case just now. Besides, Mr. Rice did not care to show it to many because of the contents. Only a very few have seen it and he kept it in the safe. It was not a large book, you know, only about fifty-five pages."

Bartley studied the safe for a second, before he spoke again. Then he asked:— "And you saw the book last night?"

"Yes, I went to the safe just before going to the hotel where I am staying. It was about nine o'clock, maybe a little after. I always closed the safe when I went out. Mr. Rice and I both had the combination. The book was there then, for I saw it."

At once I wondered if in the disappearance of the book and the money, we might not find the motive for the murder. Both it seemed had been in the library the night before and were missing now. Both were of great value. But my next thought was regarding the Aretino. If it was the only copy in existence, the person who stole it would have something he could not dispose of. Bookdealers all over the world knew about the book for the story of Mr. Rice's purchase had been in all the papers. Such being the case, to steal it seemed absurd. But Bartley's voice broke in on my thoughts.

"Miss Long, did you ever have any correspondence with James Kent over the book? You know his agent first discovered it in France."

"I know that, sir, and there was some correspondence over it. When Mr. Rice heard that an agent of Mr. Kent had bought this book, he asked me to look up what I could about it. He knew little of books himself, buying them as you know to form a great library. I did as he wished and a few weeks later he informed me he had

bought it himself. I naturally wondered how he secured the book, when the agent of the other man had discovered it. He told me that Kent's agent was informed it was simply a reprint and for some weeks, instead of snapping it up at once, tried to get the opinion of experts. While he was doing that, Mr. Rice stepped in and purchased it. There was no doubt about it being an original—the only known copy. Later Mr. Kent wrote him a very angry letter."

"Angry, was he!" exclaimed Bartley.

The girl gave a little smile. "Very angry. He told Mr. Rice he had done a very underhanded trick in buying it. He said that it was not an original, and he hoped he would suffer for what he had done."

Bartley turned to me. "Rather an indiscreet letter, it turns out now," he said. He then turned to the girl, asking if she still had the letter in the file.

She told him it was filed away and we followed her in the other room, while she went through several files. Finding the letter, she handed it to Bartley, who read it and passed it to me. As I glanced at the few lines, I could tell that at the time the letter was written, the writer, to say the least, had been angry. And at at the end was the signature in sprawling letters, "James Kent."

Nothing was said for a while. Finally the girl asked Bartley if it would be all right for her to return to the hotel. She said she had not been back since morning and that her mother would no doubt be anxious. He simply nodded and, after an expression of thanks, she left the room.

Bartley had dropped into her chair, behind the large desk that stood by the window. Its surface was covered with papers and literary journals and a typewriter stood before him. He gazed at it as if he did not see it. Suddenly I realized how tired he looked. There were deep lines upon his face, dark circles showed under his eyes and the expression around his lips was a sad one. Just as I was about to say rather plaintively that it must be around four o'clock and I had not eaten since morning, he gave a sudden exclamation. The only thing that seemed to have caused it was the typewriter and there seeemed nothing in that to startle one. Yet it interested Bartley. He took a clean sheet of paper and placd it on the machine, and slowly struck several keys. Then he took from his pocket a letter, glanced at it a moment and wrote something on the machine. He did this several times, then leaned back in the chair and looked at me quizzically: "Pelt," he said, and to me the remark seemed irrevelant, "I think it won't

harm us to smoke." He took his cigar case from his pocket, selected a long thin cigar, and handed the case to me. Lighting his cigar, he watched the first smoke ring form. Then his tone changed.

"Pelt," and his voice was crisp, "you remember those three letters that the young couple received. Those that told them not to marry because harm would come to them if they did?"

I nodded, saying, "Sure. Why?"

There was a little grin on his face as he answered. "Oh, nothing, but they were written on this machine."

"They were?" I said astonished.

He nodded, "Yes, there is no doubt of it. You notice that the letters they received have one or two peculiar things about them. The letter 'e,' for instance, has a little gap at the top as if the type was worn. Look at this." He took the piece of paper from the machine and placed it on the desk. I went over to look at it. He had written a line like this, "e e e e e e e e e," that ran across the sheet. Every single one of them had the little gap at the top of the letter. To make it clearer, he took from his pocket a magnifying glass and held it above the paper. The gap was of course made larger and clearer. It seemed queer and I looked at it several moments.

Placing the sheets of paper in his pocket, he

continued, "That's not all, Pelt. Did you notice the 't'? Maybe not, but the base of the 't' is very thick. It may be the type or the ribbon, but there is little doubt that the letters were written on the same machine. And this is the machine."

"Then," I suggested, "they must have been written by some one in the house."

He nodded, "Oh, yes, of course. For that matter, the paper the letters were written on is the same kind as I find in the desk here. The same kind of water-mark, even."

"Do you think," I ventured, "that the young man that was drowned wrote them? He had plenty of chances."

Bartley looked at me with a very remarkable expression, then laughed, though why I could not see.

"Pelt," he said, "you get wiser every day. Once you would have said something else. In your newspaper days you would have had another theory."

A little peeved, I snapped, "What?"

He laughed, "Oh, something like this. The dramatic instinct you know. The old fool expression of the papers in every crime:— 'Find the woman.' "

I flushed, remembering that in the days I was crime reporter on the *News,* I had used that

expression very often. Seeing my face redden, Bartley continued:—

"A dramatic crime. A beautiful secretary, maybe in love with the fiancé of her employer's daughter, she writes the letters to stop him from marrying."

"That's absurd," I growled. Again he laughed but went on:— "Looks feasible. Here is the machine and here is the paper in the desk. Who else could have done it?"

His tone was such that I was not sure if he was serious or not. At the same time, I felt a little alarmed for I had not thought of the fact that the machine was the one the girl used every day, or that she might even be a suspect at all. It might be as Bartley said but I did not wish to think so. Rather warmly I said as much.

Seeing my position, he placed his hand on my arm with a little pat. "No, Pelt, I did not mean it. The girl is not the type, though you know you never can be sure in a crime like this, of any one. I said that to see your face and listen to your reply. Some bright reporter will jump at that idea, however, or would if they ever knew, but—"

What he was going to say I did not know, for suddenly the butler walked into the room. He came to our sides, acting a bit embarrassed as he said:—

"Mr. Bartley, sir, there is a man wishes to see you. He asked for Miss Faith but I told him she could not be disturbed and then he insisted very violently that he must see you."

"See me?" said Bartley in a puzzled tone.

"Yes, sir; a Mr. Kent, sir, he is out in the hall now."

That Bartley was a bit startled I could tell. It was odd that, just after we had been talking about Kent, it should be announced he wished to see Bartley. How he knew that Bartley was at the house was a bit more than I could tell.

But there was no time for thought. Into the room, brushing the butler aside as if he was not there, came a man. A big man, with the appearance of great strength in his massive figure. I had seen Kent several times before and had never liked the rather sullen face he had, a face of strength but the face of a man who was used to having his own way. One look told me he was a very angry man. His face was purple, not with exercise, but with rage. His eyes snapped as he looked at us, and even the way he walked over to the desk, told of his anger. He gave us both a glance, and then his eyes came back to Bartley.

"You are John Bartley?" he snapped out.

"Yes," came the drawled reply, as Bartley's eyes never left his face.

Kent slammed his hand down on the desk so hard that I had an idea it must have stung from the blow. "Well," he spoke, his voice loud, "I want to know, why in Hell one of your rube detectives should come over to my cottage and ask me a lot of questions about where I was last night."

He must have meant Dunn, but how the detective had got hold of the story about Kent, I did not know. Yet he had, and it had made the man angry. I knew if Dunn had all the information we had regarding Kent's movements of the night before, he must have asked him some awkward questions. His eyes flashed as he repeated the question, banging his hand again upon the desk.

Bartley did not answer him at first. Instead he looked him over with a rather cool gaze, then shrugged his shoulders and replied:—

"Well, Mr. Kent, I don't happen to have any rube detective. But if one did see you, then it must have been because he wished to know where you were last night and what you were doing."

Kent almost jumped in his rage and roared, "I won't let any fool detective come around and half insinuate that perhaps I know something about who killed Rice."

Watching the man's face, Bartley drawled out:—"Was that all he said? I thought maybe he hinted you killed Rice."

For a moment I thought Kent would strike Bartley. In fact he half raised his arm, then let it drop to his side. His face became even a darker purple and for a moment his rage was so great he could not speak though he tried. At last he stammered:—

"How—dare—you, what do you mean by a thing like that?" The next moment his voice returned, "Yes, damn you, what do you mean?"

Bartley rose to his feet, "Why nothing, Kent. You said it was a rube detective. I thought maybe, if it was, he might have said that. You seem to be so put out, I could not think of anything else. There is nothing to be excited about over his seeing you. You were here last night, you know."

The man gave him a keen glance, then calmed down a little, his voice being almost natural as he replied:—

"I am pretty angry, Mr. Bartley. This man, named Nunn or Dunn, came to the house. The first thing he told me was that some one had killed Mr. Rice. Then he began to ask me some rather personal questions about where I had been last night. Even hinted I might know who killed Mr. Rice. That's enough to make any one mad."

Bartley agreed to the last, then informed Kent that we knew he had been at the house to look

at the Aretino. Kent admitted this, saying that he had been invited by Rice himself. In fact his story of coming to the house was identically like the one the Judge had told us, except he had said nothing about returning the second time to the house.

Bartley waited till he had finished, then ventured, "Why did you return to the house again, Mr. Kent?"

For a moment Kent was silent and I began to wonder if he would deny he had returned. However, after a while he said:—

"Yes, I did come back. I am about the most absent-minded beggar going. You know I had never seen the book before, though my agent discovered it. I wrote down the title page in a notebook while Rice was showing the Aretino. The notebook was in a long bill fold and I placed it on the edge of one of these cases. When I got out, I discovered I had left it, so I returned to the house. That was all."

In answer to Bartley's questions, questions which seemed to me he studied a little before he replied, his story was simple. When he came in the house he saw no one in the living room. The elevator door was open, so he took the elevator to the library, which was lighted. He found his bill fold and went right out.

Asked if he saw Rice, he said no and that the

little room off the library was dark. He saw no one and spoke to no one while in the house. But he did not tell us that when he reached the street, he started to run.

"Did you have your cane with you?" Bartley asked.

Kent was silent for a long time, then replied, "Why, yes, I think so. It's at the house now, I believe."

Bartley said nothing to this. I knew the cane which we had found in the library belonged to Kent. That is, if the butler was right in his story. Why he said it was at his house now, I did not know nor could I guess.

A few moments after this, Kent left. He had calmed down by that time though he never told us why he had come to the house to see Bartley. It was with a very curious expression on his face that Bartley watched him leave. When Kent had gone Bartley turned to me, with a slight laugh.

"Pelt," he said, "Kent has the reputation of having the worst temper of any man on the street and it has gotten him into several scrapes. Why he came over here, I would like to know. Also why he said his cane was home."

"Maybe," I suggested, "it was not his."

"Oh, there is little doubt that it is, and there

is no doubt he will have a very unpleasant time explaining why it is here."

He walked over to one of the cases, bending over it to look at the fourteenth century manuscript that lay within. For a while he studied it, smiling a second at some fancy that crossed his mind. Then he came back to my side to say:—

"I judge we had better go to the hotel and have our dinner. It's rather late, now." He paused a moment, his face becoming tender, then adding, "Pelt, I saw the young people married; myself and the butler were witnesses. The best thing, I think."

At the door of the library I paused for a moment and looked back. The long cases of manuscripts and the bookcases on the wall made it look peaceful enough. One would not think that a terrible crime had been committed there a few hours before. As we walked to the elevator and waited for it to come up, I ventured the thought that had been with me all day:—

"John, do you think we can ever solve this crime?"

He did not reply till the elevator door had closed on us. Then as if saying a prayer he turned, his face grave,

"Solve it, Pelt? If I have any right to the

reputation they give me, it will be solved." He was silent a second and I saw his fist clench, as he said slowly:—

"It must be solved."

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONFLICTING THEORIES

IT was some time after seven when we finished our dinner, going at once to our rooms. With a little sigh Bartley seated himself by the window, first lighting his pipe. He took from the table a yellow covered book. I stole a glance at the cover. The title was "Le Livret de Folastries," of Ronsard, a name that meant little to me. In a moment he was buried in its contents.

I turned and glanced from the window. As so often happens after a rainy day at sea, the sun had come forth at twilight. The sea was motionless, its surface glimmering under the rays of the setting sun. Far off, I caught the first flash of the light house at Block Island and in a second saw the answering gleam at Montauk Point. An ocean liner that would dock in New York early the next morning was out on the horizon's rim. For a moment I stood watching the water, then turned and, picking up the evening paper, found a chair.

It was only the small eight-page sheet of the

town. But blazoned across the front page were the few facts of the murder. Just a few facts, the discovery of the body and that was all. It was all the paper knew and I thought for a moment that after all we knew little more ourselves. It did say that the local police had a clue and that an arrest would soon follow. But I only smiled at this, always the papers say the police will soon make an arrest.

Having nothing else to do, after I read the brief account of the crime, I went through the rest of the newspaper. There was little of interest. One thing, however, struck me as pathetic. On what might be called the society page was an account of the wedding that was to have taken place, with a list of the few guests. It was followed by an account of Mr. Rice's career. I knew of course this had been handed in before the wedding, maybe the day before, yet it made me feel sad. How much had taken place since it was written.

The paper finished, I was just going to throw it aside, when Bartley drawled, "Pelt, look in the advertisements and see if there is a boat missing."

"A boat?" I replied, wondering why he was interested in such a thing.

He nodded, and went back to his reading. For a moment, instead of doing what he had asked,

I studied him. The keen intellectual face was tired, yet fresher than it had been before dinner. His long nervous hands were turning the pages of the book, as he quickly took in each page. Once in a while a little smile played around his lips, as if he found something that amused him. It was a few moments later, half amused, I said:—

"Well, here is your advertisement."

He placed the book on the arm of the chair and simply looked at me. It seemed as if he had been expecting I would find it. I read the five-line advertisement:—

" 'Drifted from its moorings or post, to-day, a twenty-five foot motor boat, painted green across the bow, the name Marjorie. Reward paid for any information regarding it. Call Arthur Giles, telephone 770 Watch Hill.' "

Bartley listened gravely while I read it. I wondered why under the heavens he should be interested in such a thing. When I finished, he said:—

"To-morrow, Pelt, you can look up Giles. His father is one of the cottage owners down near the golf club. You will—"

He did not finish, as there came a knock on the door, and a moment later the chief of police and Dunn entered. The two men looked as if they had been arguing, for they were still talk-

ing when they came in and the chief several times shook his head violently.

Bartley found some chairs, took a box of cigars from his bag and then waited for some one to speak. It took the chief a long time to light his cigar and, even after it was going, he said nothing for a while. Then he half grunted:—

"Mr. Bartley, Dunn here has this thing all solved, says that man Kent killed him. What do you think?"

Before Bartley could reply, Dunn, his voice squeaking even more than usual in his excitement, leaned toward us. There was an excited look on his face. "That's just what I do think, Mr. Bartley, though I will be darned if I know what reason he had."

Bartley gave him one of his unexpressive looks that might have said anything, and suggested that he tell us what he had found. I could see he wondered a little just how the detective had found out anything about Kent.

The detective was eager enough to speak. "I went over to the golf club," he said, "and asked the head waiter if he could tell me who was at that party Rice gave. He gave me the names, but Kent was not among them. Then I went round to a man named Billings, who was one of the guests. He told me about Kent. Said he

came to the house with them from the golf club. He said also that he had a cane, but he don't remember if he had it or not when he came back, that is when he left them. He told me that Kent left them after they came from the house and walked back toward it. You know the detectives saw him go in and also saw him come out without a cane, and running."

The chief did not say anything. His heavy face did not wear even an expression of the slightest interest and he calmly continued smoking. I wondered if this was all Dunn had discovered. But it was not, the most startling thing came next.

"I went over to the cottage that Kent has and, when his butler came to the door, described the cane and told him I had found one like it. He said at first that it was not his master's, that his was in the rack in the house. I suggested he look. He did so and then a bit surprised he said it was not there and that Kent must have left it somewhere. At this moment, Kent himself came into the hall."

Bartley with a grin asked, "Was he angry?"

Dunn smiled, "You bet he was. First thing he said was 'what in Hell do you want?' I started to ask him about the time he spent at Rice's house and he got mad. In fact almost started to throw me out."

"Did you say anything about the cane?" was Bartley's question.

"No," was the reply, "I thought I better not. I knew there was no doubt it was his cane, but I said nothing to him about it."

The silence came for a while. I could see that Bartley's eyes traveled once in a while to the chief and I could tell from the chief's manner that he did not agree with his detective. What the difference was I could not say. It was Dunn that broke the silence, a questioning tone in his squeaky voice:—

"What I can't see, Mr. Bartley, is why that man should wish to kill Rice. It seems a pretty good case against him. He was in the room, he made some excuse after he left, to go back. He was seen running from the house. Rice was killed with a cane, and Kent's cane seems to be the one that did it. But why, I don't see. Kent has money enough and no quarrel with the dead man."

I could see he knew nothing about the book, which after all was the only motive we had. Bartley soon enlightened him. He told him how the book was secured and the letter Kent wrote. He added also that the book was missing. The story was a great surprise to both of the men, but there was an incredulous tone in the chief's voice as he said:—

"But lord, Mr. Bartley, who ever heard of any one killing a man for a book? That's foolish, the world's full of books, I can buy all I want for two dollars."

Bartley threw back his head and laughed. "Well, chief, so you can, but this book is worth about $30,000. I can tell you of several cases where men have been killed for valuable books. There is a French case where a book collector set fire to another man's house and killed him, in order to make sure that a book of which they both had the only copies, would be destroyed. You can't tell what a book lover might do."

The chief's face was a study and he asked in a doubting tone, "Did you say that book was worth $30,000? Why, that's absurd."

Again Bartley laughed, answering, "No, it's the truth, chief."

The chief shook his head, as if he could hardly believe the story. The fact that a book could be worth that amount was something he found hard to understand and deep down in his heart, I am sure, he doubted it. But all at once a startled look came over his face. He turned to Bartley.

"If that's so, then that gives a motive for Rice's death."

Bartley was silent for a moment, his face grave and when he answered, he spoke slowly:—

"That's true, chief, it does. The fact the book

is missing and that this man Kent once tried to secure it, will of course throw some suspicion on him. He has a number of things to account for. The reason for his return to the house he gives as having gone back for a bill fold he left on one of the cases. He claimed he did not see Rice when he went back the second time. The cane belongs to him and he did not have it when he left the house the last time. Yet he tells us the cane is at his house now. Dunn tells us the butler said it was not there. I knew that, for it was the weapon that killed Rice. All these things Kent will have to explain."

"I had another theory," came from the lips of the chief.

Interested, I asked, "What was it, chief?"

"Well," he said, half apologizing, "it was, it seemed to me, just as reasonable as that of Dunn's to think that maybe that young man Maxson might know something about it. He said, you know, 'Wait till to-morrow!' He was up in the room that night also. This morning he left the house early with a package under his arm and the money is missing, you know."

"You think that package he had was that missing box of gold pieces?"

"Sure," came the reply. "It seems more sensible to me that Rice was killed for the money than for a book."

"Well," drawled Bartley, "if we say he killed him for the money, then who took the book?"

Rather warmly came the reply, "Why, he could have taken it if that darned book was worth all that coin, and I half disbelieve you. He could have taken both."

Bartley studied his fingers a moment, turning them from side to side before he replied:—"That seems psychologically wrong, chief. The young man might take the money, I grant that, but he would not be interested in the book. Why, if he took it he could do nothing with it. He could sell it, every bookdealer in the world will be watching for it and the man that tried to sell it would be arrested as soon as he offered it. On the other hand, if Kent took the book, and I have little doubt but what he would, then who took the money? Kent would not. He is a rich man. Money means nothing to him. He might have taken the book,—but not the money. Meanwhile, both are missing."

Dunn gave him a shrewd look, "Then you think that both things were taken by the person that killed Rice?"

"I don't know," was Bartley's thoughtful answer. "The fact that both money and book are missing, rather puzzles me. Either one of the two men you just mentioned might have taken one of them but neither would have taken both,

it seems to me. Then again, it's my opinion that Rice's murder was not premeditated."

"The devil you say," came the chief's startled reply.

"Oh, yes, I have the idea that Rice found some one in his little room, and a struggle started in which he was killed. I don't think that it was premeditated in the sense the person was waiting to murder him. The blows were very savage, as if struck in sudden rage. But the money and book being missing, rather puzzzle me."

Eagerly Dunn leaned forward on his chair. "Mr. Bartley," he said, "suppose some one else took them, not the murderer."

"Yes," came the reply, "I thought of that. But who?"

"The girl, the secretary," came the quick answer. "She knew the money was there, she knew about the book and she could have got away with them both."

Bartley half smiled, as he replied, "You forget, Dunn, that after she left Rice showed the book to five or six men. We are sure of that. Then again, if the money had been taken by her, its loss would have been noticed in the morning. She could not have known Mr. Rice would be killed."

Dunn shrugged his shoulders. "That's all

right, but that book might have been there this morning. She knew about it and was alone in the room all day. She had plenty of chances to take the book after the murder if she wished. The policeman who guarded the room knew nothing of the book. She could have got away with it and she knew what it was worth."

It was with a sinking feeling that I listened to him. How much of what he was saying he believed I could not tell, though he seemed earnest enough. I had not thought before of the girl being left in the room alone during the day. But as her face flashed into my mind, with the fine eyes that looked at one so honestly, I knew I could never believe she had any knowledge of the missing book.

Bartley's next words half agreed with me, for he said:— "That is, of course, all true, as far as you go, Dunn. No one knows where the book went or who took it. If you try to link Kent up with the murder, then you must have a theory that he took the book. There is no other motive for him than that. He might, it is true, kill to secure the book. If he did, it was done in a sudden fit of anger, one of those spells of rage he is noted for. But so far we cannot say. All we know is that both book and money are missing. I hardly believe that both were

taken by the same person." He paused, took a fresh cigar and turned to Dunn with a question in his voice:—

"Then you don't think now, the murderer got out of the window?"

The detective shook his head in a puzzled manner and threw out his hands in a gesture, "Lord knows, I don't. You say the door was locked on the inside. If so, the window was the only way out, but I don't see how one would have the nerve to walk that ledge in the dark."

Bartley gave him a look and said dryly, "You overlook the fact the door had a spring lock and all that was necessary was to close the door. That would lock it."

This surprised both the chief and Dunn, for they gave each other an inquiring glance and then looked back at Bartley. Evidently they had both overlooked this fact. Amused at their expressions, he continued:—

"That of course disposes of the necessity of getting out by the window. All the murderer had to do was to close the door. But it brings up another thing. Both the young man and Kent were in the room and were the last two that must have seen him. Maxson went up just after the men left, he came down in about twenty minutes. Kent says he was not in the room five minutes and that he did not see Rice at all.

Now where was Rice? Was he dead at the time Kent went in? Was he dead when the young man went in? We don't know, and the young man they say is drowned. That's the big mystery. If Kent told the truth, where was Rice?"

"Could he have not gone down to his rooms on the third floor?" I asked.

Bartley nodded, saying that was the only solution, if he was alive at that time. So the talk went back and forth for a while with little results. If Bartley had any clues, he was keeping them to himself. The chief was hesitating between a belief that the young man might know about the crime and the other theory, that Kent might have killed him. But both were theories and that was about all.

It was just as he rose to go, that the chief, with one hand on the door, asked:—

"Mr. Bartley, do you think I ought to get a warrant out for this fellow Kent?"

Bartley thought it over for a moment, then shook his head. "I don't think I would now, chief. The inquest comes to-morrow and you can wait till then. Kent is a man of position and you want to be pretty sure what you are doing before you lock him up. Of course you want to keep your eyes on him and make sure that he does not leave the state. But I would wait."

And agreeing to do this, the two men left.

CHAPTER EIGHT

BARTLEY TALKS

FOR a while after the men went out, Bartley busied himself with his books. There were a number of questions that I wished to ask him, but he did not care to talk, so lighting a cigar and leaning back in my chair, I ran through in my mind the evidence. The more I thought about it, the more puzzled I became. It did look as if either Kent or the young man could have killed Rice. Both had the opportunity but both could not have done it. Which one did, I could not tell. Kent, of course, would have been glad to have secured the book. But still I agreed with Bartley that the money would not have interested him and that was missing also. At length I gave it up as a bad job. When I glanced up, I saw that Bartley was looking at me with a quizzical expression. His book was on a stand near by as if he no longer cared to read. His eyes meeting mine, he said:—

"So you cannot solve the mystery?"

I shook my head, saying nothing. For a while he was silent, but speaking at last:—

"I am not surprised, Pelt. I am not satisfied

that any of us have gone very far toward solving it yet."

"Then you do not agree with the chief and Dunn?" I asked.

There was a doubting tone in his voice, as he replied, "I am not sure. Their solution seems almost too simple. I can see, of course, that the evidence that is piling up against Kent may be hard for him to disprove. But I don't know,"

A little surprised, I ventured, "Do you think Kent would have killed a man for a book?"

He half smiled, "You know, Pelt, I am a book lover myself. If a man must kill that's as good a thing to kill for as anything else. The history of book collecting has a few cases where men have done that very thing—killed another to get possession of a rare book. Then again we must remember that Kent has a bad reputation regarding his temper. Years ago he almost killed a man in a quarrel. His money got him out of that affair. But in this case the evidence seems to connect him with the crime."

He paused a moment, then added, "Let's look at it. Let us start with the buying of the Aretino. Though the engravings are very rare, yet it's not a book I would care to have. For years bookmen have wondered if, after all, there might not be a copy of the original edition in Europe, hidden away in some old castle or library. All

modern copies, sold under cover, of course, are simply reprints—modern engravings made to conform with the sonnets. Kent's agent finds one but foolishly is not sure if it's the original or not. Instead of getting an option on it as he should have done, he goes out to ask the bookmen about it. While doing that, Rice stepped in and bought it. Rice knew nothing about the book, only that if it happened to be the original copy, it was the only one in the world. His securing it of course made Kent angry and he wrote several letters about it. Then comes the dinner last evening. Though not one of the party, he comes over to say that the copy Rice had was not the first edition. Rice then invites them all to the house to see it, Kent included. They stay a while, then go, but Kent walks a little ways with them, excuses himself and goes back to the house. He had a cane when he first went in, when he came out the second time he had none. He starts to run, why we do not know. The next morning they find Rice dead, killed by that cane, and the book missing. Kent tells us the cane is at his house, though we know it is not. That's the case."

It seemed very strong and I said as much. Bartley rather soberly agreed, adding, "It's all circumstantial evidence and yet it's strong enough to arrest a man on, there is no doubt of

that, and men have been hanged on less. But there is another thing."

"What's that?" was my eager question.

"It's the fact that we are not sure that Rice was alive when Kent went to the room the second time. Just before he went up, the young man came from the library. We know he had a slight quarrel with his uncle that day. We know the box of money disappeared also. We know he left the house early this morning with some kind of a package about the size of the missing box under his arm. We know that he said 'Wait till to-morrow, I will give your old wedding a jolt.' The facts against him are also enough to cause the police to make an arrest. The circumstantial evidence, though different, is just as strong against one as the other."

"But they can't both have done it," I said.

"No," he answered slowly, "of course not. To me the strange thing is this. Kent might take the book, that I can see easily enough. Yet the money he would not touch, at least I do not think he would. He has money enough. The young man might take the money, but he would hardly have taken the book. It's not a thing one can sell, for bookdealers will be looking for it. The moment it is offered to them, the person offering it will be arrested. But both are gone. Did the same person take them?

If so, was it some one besides these two named? I can hardly believe that either one of them would take both book and money."

That seemed reasonable, yet it only made the mystery darker. There was no one else that could have taken them, it seemed to me, and then it flashed into my mind that the girl had been alone all the day in the room. I did not even wish to think she might be connected with the affair but honesty compelled me to mention this.

Bartley, rather moodily, informed me he had thought of that. He said that of course she would have had a chance to hide the book and she knew its value. Also, she was the last one to see the boxes of gold pieces. I waited for him to say that he was sure she had nothing to do with the money and book disappearing, but to my surprise he did not. Instead he lighted a fresh cigar and simply said:— "You see, we don't know when the book was taken. In fact, there are a good many things we don't know."

I could see that he was in the mood to talk. It was always his rule to talk over the various aspects of his cases, turn them inside out as it were. True, he seemed to jump from one thing to another in his conversation, but that was because his mind worked faster than his tongue.

So I said nothing, waiting for him to speak again, which he did in a little while.

"Pelt," he said at last, "we start with the first point, the locked room. We know that they broke the door down to enter. What does that mean to you?"

Remembering that in the Underwood case, we had a somewhat similar setting, I mentioned it. He half smiled but shook his head. "No, this is different. Here we have an open window. True, it's rather hard to think one could walk on the edge below the window and slide down a copper pipe to the ground. It was raining and dark, yet it could have been done."

I said nothing. I was willing to admit it might be possible to do, but somehow I had the idea the storm of the night before was enough in itself to prevent any one from trying that foolish thing. I said as much.

Bartley listened to my objections gravely enough, though I saw a twinkle in his eyes. When I was through he continued as if I had not broken in on him. "That's all very true, I simply said it could be done, not that it was. You see it was not necessary. The door had a spring catch. All that was needed was to close it. To get in, unless one had the key, one would

have to break in the door, reach in and turn the knob. That's what happened. Did Kent close that door when he came out the second time? No one knows."

He paused as if thinking, then went on, "I looked the room over where Rice was killed. There were no clues, not a thing except the cane. Every appearance was that of a terrific struggle. The curtains at the window and even the draperies over the door from the library were pulled down in the struggle that swept through the entire room. I have an idea that Rice surprised some one in the room, the struggle started and ended in the murder. Not a premeditated murder, but one committed in sudden rage, to hush the lips of the man that was killed. That would make the motive seem robbery. Then all the murderer had to do, was to go out and close the door. That was all."

"But," I suggested, "one would think he would have been seen."

Rather dryly he replied, "Well, Dunn thinks he was. The detectives saw Kent."

Another thought struck me. "One might have thought the detectives could have prevented the murder. What were they there for but to prevent trouble."

He turned and looked at me with interest, then drawled, "But, Pelt, those two detectives

were not expecting a murder. They followed out the instructions that Rice gave them. He told them he would be in the library till around twelve and to start their work then. When they went up around twelve, the library door was locked. They went to the third floor, naturally thinking Rice was in bed, and spent the night there. No one could get to the library floor while the elevator door was open. They simply opened it and, as far as the floor above was concerned, they were right in thinking it was secure. The great question to my mind is another one. Did Rice go to his rooms on the third floor, then return to the library and on his return surprise some one there, or was he in the room when the murderer came in? I don't know."

"But," I started again—

He broke in on me, as if he did not hear. "Theories they say count little, yet I don't know. In this case, it seems as if we must take every little fact, build up a theory, see if it fits anywhere and be ready to discard it. There is evidence enough to convict two men but both of them cannot be guilty."

Silence again for a while, I breaking it at last to ask why the young man would have said, "Wait till to-morrow, I will give your old wedding a jolt."

Bartley grinned, "That's a pretty bad thing.

Think what a jury would say about it. They would say, and you can hear the District Attorney in his speech to them stressing it, 'The young man knew then that in the morning his uncle would be dead. Why, that statement is enough to convict him.' But it did not mean anything of the kind."

"What did it mean?" I asked with interest.

"Ever hear the expression, the inferiority complex?" he grinned back at me.

Dimly I nodded, though in truth I was not sure. Somewhere I had heard the expression but was not sure what it meant. Seeing I did not understand, he grinned again.

"A bit of modern psychology from Freud and others. We mean that subconsciously a person feels he is inferior to others. Others have more wealth, more education and greater physical strength. The person realizes it, not consciously, but it's there all the time back in the subconscious mind. Such people, in order to overcome it, speak loudly about what they will do, what they have done. Half, if not all, the liars are of this type. They create the things they wish to do. They try to overcome that subconscious feeling they have of inferiority, by telling of the great things they wish to do, or will do. They are the ones that say 'listen' or 'wait till to-morrow, I'll give you a start.' "

He paused to light another cigar and swept on. "Take this young man. His mother was poor I find, yet very proud, always telling the boy that he was the equal of the others, in fact the superior. When you find a mother doing that she also has the same inferiority complex. She died, the boy was taken into the home of his uncle, a home of wealth, given money and position. But always his subconscious mind reflected the early teaching. Deep down in his mind he felt that all he had was the gift of another, he felt that he was simply receiving charity. On the other side was the daughter to whom it all belonged. He saw her every day, his subconscious mind kept whispering 'She has a right to all this, you have not. It's charity.' So like the type, he talked wildly about startling people, about doing big things, in order to be noticed. If he did not have wealth or position, yet he was saying subconsciously 'I can be superior in other ways.' The technical term is that he was compensating himself. But that talk was all psychic, it meant little. It was simply his effort to show he was equal to the others—to be observed. So his statement 'Wait till tomorrow, I will give your old wedding a jolt' did not necessarily mean murder. It might have, I admit. What I think it did mean however, was this:— 'When the time for the wed-

ding comes you will find I did something that will make me the one talked about, not you. I will overshadow the wedding.' "

"He did," I said dryly, "he got drowned."

"Good for you, Pelt," came the unexpected answer. "Only I don't think he was drowned."

Startled, I looked to see if he was fooling. There was not a doubt in the world that he was drowned and I wondered at Bartley's reply. Seeing my look, he laughed, then said earnestly:—

"No, I don't think he was drowned. Look the thing over. If he was drowned it would be, of course, an accident. We don't think he committed suicide and yet all the settings look far more like suicide than accidental drowning."

Rather amazed I asked, "What settings?"

He gave me a rather disgusted look but enlightened me by saying, "You found, did you not, that in his clothes there was nothing of value? In fact you said that there was absolutely nothing in his pockets. Now it does not stand to reason that, if he went down for a swim, there would not be a thing—money, watch, knife or the like—in his clothes. There was not, so perhaps they were removed before. If so, why? Then again he was a good swimmer, yet in hardly any surf at all he drowns. You want also to remember that package he had.

The keeper of the bath house saw him take it down to the beach. The life guard did not see any and it was not in his bath house. You overlooked one thing in not asking the guard how many minutes after the clerk saw him, the young man appeared on the beach. But anyway, you did not find the package in the place with the clothes. What did he do with it? Where did he carry it? The day was foggy, he could get around without being seen. Now where did he go before he put on his bathing suit?

"But John," I urged, "if he did not drown, then good lord, it looks as if he has run away. If he has, if he tried to make people think he was drowned, then it means he knows about the murder."

He half smiled, then replied, "That's one way of looking at it. That's the view the state's attorney will no doubt take. But there is another thing might have happened."

"What?" came my eager question.

"Remember that inferiority complex. Remem- his saying 'Wait till to-morrow.' Now naturally he did not know it would be foggy, of course we know that. But suppose he did this. Wishing to be talked about, wishing also to spoil his cousin's wedding day, he simply disappears. If they had been married at the time they planned, this story of his being drowned would have come

in just before the wedding. Think of the stir. Suppose he went away somewhere for a few days to stay till the thing was over."

"But," I argued, "think also of the trouble he would be in when he returned."

"Yes," he drawled, "no doubt of that, but he never thought of it. People of his kind of a mental makeup never do. They never look ahead at all. But if that was what he did, the fog was a godsend to him."

He looked at his watch and yawned, then rose slowly to his feet, saying it was time he went to bed. Taking the hint, I went into my bedroom and undressed, thinking all the time of what he had just said. It might be so. It was odd that there was nothing in the clothes of the young man. In my pajamas, I came to the door and asked:—

"Do you think he did that?"

Bartley turned from the window, where he had been looking out. He seemed to think a second before he answered:—

"Oh! I don't know, one theory is as good as the other. But that reminds me, what color suit was it that Maxson left in his bath house?"

"A blue one," was my answer.

Slowly shaking his head as if amused he said, "That's queer. The butler says he wore a gray one when he left the house this morning."

CHAPTER NINE

I HEAR MORE ABOUT MAXSON

AFTER we had breakfast the next morning, the first thing I did was to drive Bartley to the Rice home. He expected to spend most of the day at the inquest, which I was not to attend. For some reason, he was very keen that I find out at once about the advertisement that had been placed in the paper, regarding the missing boat. Just why he was interested in the boat, I did not know and he did not enlighten me.

As so often happens at the shore, there had come a beautiful sunny day after the fog and rain. The lawns were fresh, the bright spots of flowers in the small gardens giving a touch of color to the green backgrounds. As we rode along the side of the bay, I could see that people already were going out in their boats, whose sails flapped loosely under the very slight breeze. Three miles across the water, the white roofs and church steeples of Stonington could be seen.

Leaving Bartley at the house, in front of which stood a number of cars, I turned the machine to-toward the Golf Club. The young man I was to

see lived in another section of the Hill. It was a newer part, with large summer homes—a section that stretched almost to the Golf Club itself, and it was no trouble to find the house, a large rambling place of granite, which looked cool and new. But the butler, when he answered my ring, informed me that young Mr. Giles was at the Golf Club and I could reach him there if I wished.

The Golf Club was only a mile away and soon I was climbing the hill that led to it. Few clubs in the country have a more beautiful spot for their club house. It stood high on the very top of a hill, from which one could see the wide expanse of the country and sea. I went round the grass tennis courts, stopped the car and went in to see where the young man was. I soon discovered that he was out on the links and that I would have to wait till he played the ninth hole by the house, if I did not wish to chase after him.

So I went out on the veranda and sank into a chair. For a while I studied the view. The air was clear and bright. Far off I could just glimpse the dark, tall line of the light house at the end of Long Island—miles away across the sound. Nearer, to the left, Block Island stood high above the water. The air was so clear that not only could I see the sand cliffs, but also the

white houses near the harbor. The sea was like glass, a dark blue sea—scintillating and dancing under the sunlight. A few boats were near shore, and further out, a great ocean steamer bound for Europe.

Finding on a nearby stand a New York paper, I picked it up, eager to see what they might have said about the murder. I knew that it would cause a stir, the circumstance of Rice being killed the day of his daughter's wedding being more dramatic than the usual crime. Besides, he was one of the best-known men in New York, well-known and liked. But after I had read the long article that was on the first page of the paper, I found nothing but what I knew. In fact the paper seemed simply to have the bare item of the death and little else, though they had padded out the article with a long account of his business life. Just as I finished the article, a young man spoke to me:—

"Say," came the voice, "are you the chap they told me in the club was looking for me?"

I looked up. Before me was a young man of about twenty dressed in a golf suit. His face was flushed from the exercise and he gazed at me with rather an inquiring look in his eyes.

I judged it was the young man I wished to see and asked him if his name was Giles. He simply

nodded, lighting a cigarette. Then I asked him if he had lost his boat. He grinned in reply.

"Blamed if I know," was his answer. "The old boat has gone, that's about all I know. Maybe it broke away, maybe it was swiped. Do you know anything about it?"

I had to confess that I did not know anything about the boat, an answer that caused the young man to look at me, as if wondering why under the heavens I had asked him about it. But if he wondered he said nothing though his next remark made me start.

"You know," he added, "that blamed boat took a fine time to get lost—just as Maxson and I were about to go on a trip."

I was a little startled at this, for I had no idea he knew the young man that was drowned. He gave me no time to ask about the trip, continuing:—

"You know, I don't just see how it happened Maxson should get drowned. He was a good swimmer. Why, I have seen him swim five miles in a rough sea. Knocked me flat when I heard what happened to him. We were going on a little camping trip in a few days.

Interested, I suggested, "You must have been good friends?"

"Oh, I don't know," he answered back, "we knocked round together a bit. He was a queer

fellow, but not so bad at that. I was sorry to hear he was drowned."

It seemed to dawn on him all at once that he was talking a bit freely with a man he did not know and who had not told him his errand. He dried up at once, looking me over with a glance that told me he wondered why I had wished to see him. But I did not tell him. Instead I asked him where they would have camped if the boat had not been stolen or drifted away.

I thought for a second that he would not answer. But evidently he decided that having said as much as he had, he might as well answer my question. So he told me that Maxson had a little camp on Mystic Island and that they had intended to spend several days there. After saying this, he got up from the chair he had dropped into. So far as he was concerned the interview was over and he went away, giving me a wondering look as he passed round the corner.

As I went to the car, I heard his voice evidently telling his experience with me to some friends. I smiled at this remark:— "Darned if I don't think that fellow was a policeman or something. He never told me what he wished."

As I drove back to the resort, I ran over in my mind what he had told me. On the face of it, there seemed nothing of value. That he should have known young Maxson was not so strange.

That they had expected to go camping the day Maxson was drowned was a little unusual, but one of those coincidences, however, that crop up once in a while. The loss of his boat seemed to mean little. Then all at once something Bartley had said flashed into my mind, I gave a little whistle and almost ran over a dog that was in the street.

Bartley had said it was an even chance that the young man was not drowned at all. He had hinted that Maxson had simply gone somewhere to hide during the wedding. True, there was another angle to consider. He might have stolen the money and he might even have killed his uncle. I knew the chief had the half idea he was guilty of murder. If so, then he would have gone away. The thought came, suppose he had stolen the boat. He could have walked across the little neck of ground that divided the ocean from the bay. Then it would have been simple enough to swim out to the boat and in the fog he would not be seen. Something of the kind must have taken place, for drowning would not explain what had happened to the package that he took to the bath house. If he had been drowned while bathing, the package should have been in the bath house. All at once, I decided perhaps Bartley was nearer right than I had supposed when he suggested

that maybe the young man was not drowned. But if he had gone away, then I understood how difficult it would be for him to make people think he did not know of his uncle's death. If he was alive, he was in for a disagreeable time when found.

I had reached the main street by this time. A long street, having on one side the wharves of the bay and on the other a long row of small stores. It was crowded with cars bringing people from the bathing beach and I had to drive slowly. Stopping to wait till the car ahead of me went on, I noticed that I was in front of the leading summer grocery store of the Hill. An idea came to me. Climbing out of the car I went into the store. I knew that the clerks in the stores at the Hill knew every person that was there. They were only open three months of the year and naturally were in close touch with the cottage people. I found a clerk and as soon as he was free, asked him if Maxson had bought any goods yesterday. To my great surprise he said he had.

It seemed he came into the store about eight o'clock in the morning. He bought some packages of crackers, a number of canned goods, soups, beans and the like and a number of other things. The clerk remembered it because he

loaned him a basket to carry the goods in. What he wanted them for he did not know and the young man had not told him.

Going out of the store, I stood for a moment looking up the street. Hundreds of cars were passing, filled with gayly dressed women returning from their morning dip in the sea. The sidewalks were filled with a crowd of people, evidently one of the many excursions from some small country place. The popcorn and peanut stands by my side were doing a rushing business with the young folks.

I paid little attention to the people. My mind was too filled with what the clerk had told me regarding Maxson. The young man had bought a great quantity of provisions, the sort of things one might buy if one were going camping. I remembered that Giles had told me they had intended to do this, but he said 'in a few days.' One would not expect that Maxson would buy their food several days before they went. Then there was another thing. The young man had taken the goods somewhere for there had been no basket in the bath house with his clothes. But where had he taken them, and why had he bought them? That was the question. And suddenly I decided that Bartley was right. The young man had not been drowned but where he

had gone and why he went away I could not see.

Dinner was over by the time I reached the hotel and I hurried into the dining room. Thirty minutes later, I went up to the room wondering if Bartley had sent any instructions for the afternoon.

What was my surprise when I opened the door, to see him curled up in a chair reading. The smoke of his pipe curled lazily to the open window. He turned when I entered, gave me a smile and threw his book on the floor. "Well?" he said.

I told him what I had found, first speaking about the boat and the fact the owner had intended to go camping with Maxson. Then I told him what the clerk in the grocery store had said. He listened gravely enough though at times I saw a twinkle in his eyes and at the end he gave a slight chuckle. Then seeing I had finished, he turned facing me.

"Well, Pelt," he said, "I guess in the end we will have to go and find the young man. You see it looks as if I were right when I said he had not been drowned. I am sure of it. We will have to go and find him."

"Find him," I queried, "do you know where he is?" He shook his head. "Not exactly, but I

think I may have an idea where we might find him."

I had been surprised to see him when I entered the room for I did not think that the inquest would be over till night. Inquests were, as a rule, long-drawn-out affairs that seemed never to end. But the inquest was over, and in a moment he started to tell me what had taken place.

There had been nothing that we did not already know. In fact the inquest had been very short, with no new witnesses, and hardly anything of importance had been brought out. If Bartley and the chief expected to discover new facts, then they must have been disappointed. They knew just as much when it started as they did when it was over.

The butler had told his story of the events of the night and the finding of the body the next morning. He had admitted that the nephew had quarreled with his uncle several times, but did not think the quarrels amounted to much, adding the young man had a quick temper. He was followed by the daughter whose testimony was simply the story she had told us. She also, though rather reluctant to admit it, was forced to say that the young man had quarreled with her father and she repeated the threat he had made regarding the surprise they would get the

next morning. She knew of no motive for her father's death.

The detectives told how they expected to go to work about nine but had been told that it would not be necessary till about twelve. They had gone to the library to report to Mr. Rice shortly after he came in with his friends. He told them to have lunch in the servants' dining room and to go on guard at midnight, saying he would be in his library till then. Shortly before twelve one went down to eat, leaving the other in the great living room, and when he returned the other went down. Then both went to the top floor in the elevator. They found the library door locked and they knocked but no one answered.

Then they went to the third floor where they stayed the night, leaving the elevator door open. They thought Mr. Rice had gone to bed, and had locked the library door. They were asked why they did not go up once in a while to the library floor. Their answer was, that they knew the door was locked and as the elevator door stood open before them, no one could get to the floor. Then they told of being asked to break open the door and finding the man murdered. Their testimony was simply the story they had told us.

Bartley said the secretary was only on the stand for a moment or so. She told of working till about nine in the evening, getting the wedding announcements ready to send out the next morning. At nine she went to her hotel. She admitted that it was Bartley that first informed her the box of money was missing. It had been there the night before, she told the coroner, and the book also. Bartley laughed a little when he came to tell me of Kent's appearance on the stand. He said that Kent was not only angry but he yelled his answers back to the coroner. More than once, the coroner threatened to arrest him because of his tone and manner. His story practically was what he had told us, saying he went back to get his bill fold which he had left.

"What did he say about his cane?" I asked.

Bartley grinned. "Told us it was home and then suddenly the coroner flashed it on him." He smiled a little at the thought, and paused.

"What did he say then?" was my eager question.

"First he said it was not his. Next he said it was. Then he said that he was sure he had taken it with him from the house and that it must have been stolen. Then all at once, he suddenly remarked he was so absent-minded, that

as he put it, 'I might have left the thing.' But he could not explain why it was left there. The coroner then asked him why he started to run when he left the house. His answer was that it was raining and he wished to escape the storm." Bartley was silent for a moment, then with a cynical smile remarked, "He made rather a poor appearance and I think the coroner's jury would have held him but for two things, maybe I better say one."

"What were they?"

He threw out his hands in disgust. "Well, that jury was made up of the average sort of commonplace people, the fourteen-year-old minds that the psychologists speak of. The sort that bring prohibition and other reforms. They knew he was a rich man and that awed them. That was one thing. The other was the absolute impossibility of their understanding that there was any kind of a motive for the crime."

"But the book?" I said.

Again he threw out his hands. "The book! Good lord, do you think that jury could ever get it into their heads that any one book could be worth $30,000? Why it was beyond them, they even grinned when the figure was mentioned. Neither could they think that a man might kill to secure a book. If there had been any other

motive they might have held him. As it was, the verdict was the usual one:— 'Death by the hands of a person or persons unknown.' "

I could see his point, yet his tone made me wonder if he thought that Kent knew anything about the murder. I asked him as much. For a moment or so he did not reply, giving me a disgusted look. Then he said:—

"Well, Pelt, that's a strange question to ask. You know just as much as I do. If you were writing a detective story, you could at this point tell your readers that every fact the detectives knew, they knew also. I have hidden nothing. The facts are all on the table. I don't know if Kent killed him. Dunn thinks he did, he is sure of it. And I admit that the missing book makes a good motive and that I don't like Kent's story about his cane. But—"

"But what?" I asked eagerly, breaking in on him.

He laughed, "But then again, Pelt, there is the young man. The chief rather leans to him. That's his one pet theory and he wants to stick to it. He says that there is just as much against him as against Kent. And it looks so, at that. Only—"

He paused, then got up and looked from the window. The sun was bright and a slight breeze was blowing. Then he turned and finished his

sentence. "Only, as I said before, I don't think either of them would take both money and book. Yet the facts are all on the table. You can make of them what you wish. There is nothing I am keeping back."

Again he paused, then suddenly with his happy smile that made him seem like a boy, he said eagerly:—

"Pelt, it's too fine a day to stay in. Let's go up to the club and have some golf. It's early enough for eighteen holes, besides we have work cut out for to-morrow."

And wondering what he meant by "work for to-morrow" I followed him from the room.

CHAPTER TEN

A GOLD PIECE IS FOUND

NINE o'clock the next morning found Bartley and me down on the wharf in the bay, waiting for the chief. Just where we were going I did not know for Bartley had not informed me. But we were bound somewhere, for at our feet, tugging on a rope, was a motor boat. It was a long, narrow boat and it needed but one glance to see that it had plenty of speed.

The chief was late and Bartley and I seated ourselves on the edge of the wharf with our legs dangling over the water. It was a beautiful day, the sun warm with scarcely any breeze. The sails of the cat-boats that took parties fishing hung motionless as the boats moved the length of their ropes with the slight tide. A few young people in canoes were paddling rather listlessly near shore and once in a while I would hear the pit-pat of a motor boat across the bay.

Bartley was reading, something that he always did when he had spare time, turning the pages of the gray covered book rather slowly. I looked over his shoulder to see what it might be but the title "Memoires Secrets of Bauchau-

mont" did not give me any information. So for a while I glanced down into the clear blue water of the bay, watching the small fish that played around the piles of the wharf. Then I wondered where we might be going, deciding at length that perhaps we were to try to find young Maxson.

At length we were hailed by the chief's voice saying, "Sorry I am late, but I got tied up." The chief was warm, his face flushed as if he had been hurrying. The thing I noticed most, however, was the fact that he was not in uniform, wearing instead a rather old blue suit that would have looked better if it had been pressed.

The boat was fast and it was not till some minutes later, when we were approaching Stonington, that any of us spoke. I, myself, had been too interested in watching the low outline of the little village across the bay, with its white houses and church steeples looming up before us, to say anything. It was the chief that broke the silence first.

In a rather musing tone he said, "You know, Mr. Bartley, Dunn is pretty sure now that Kent is our man. He has a man watching him and he says there is not much doubt he killed Rice. Only his motive seems so foolish. I don't get any man killing another for a book."

Bartley, who was steering, swung the boat round in a wide circle and headed out of the

river into the sound. The first swell of the open sea caused us to rise on its surface. He laughed, replying:—

"Oh, I don't know, chief. Did you ever hear of the murder stamp?"

The chief shook his head.

"Well, that was a stamp that caused a murder. The stamp got its name in 1892. Goston Leroux, a famous French stamp collector, was found murdered in his apartment. It was evident that ordinary theft was not the motive for a drawer with ten thousand francs was found open and the money untouched. Search by the detectives revealed that a Hawaiian stamp, worth at least $5,000 at that time, was the only thing missing. Some time later, Hector Giroux, a friend of Leroux and an enthusiastic stamp collector, was heard to boast that he had one of the few specimens of the missing stamp. It was very rare. He was arrested and at last confessed that he had found it 'impossible to live without that stamp' and had killed his friend."

The chief gave a little whistle of wonderment, saying, "Good lord, killed a man for a stamp. It seems foolish."

Bartley nodded, "Yes, that was it. And, chief, there are at least two known cases where a man has been murdered for a rare book. In one case

the murderer killed a friend who had the other copy of a rare book and then burned the house. It was done so he might be able to say he had the only copy in the world."

"They must be crazy," the chief protested, an answer that caused Bartley to laugh. We had passed through the channel into the sound and had turned south. There was a little swell, the long easy roll of the ocean which comes often after a storm. But the sea was not rough. Ahead of us, a few miles south, I could see Noank, the shipyards being plainly in sight. Near us, in shore, was the long breakwater with the light house at its end. The sound seemed almost deserted, though near the Race light I saw the white sails of a ship.

It was some time after this that Bartley told us where we were going. Something, I discovered, he thought I should have known myself, though to be truthful it had never entered my head.

I am taking a chance," he said, "that perhaps we may find young Maxson on Mystic Island."

The chief gave a start at this, protesting that we knew the young man had been drowned. I saw that Bartley had not told him his theory that the drowning had been faked. This he did in a few words, telling the facts that made him

think the nephew was still alive. When he finished, the chief shrugged his shoulders, saying:—

"Well, Mr. Bartley, if it's a fact that he is still alive, then I will be damned if I don't say that it proves he killed his uncle. Why in Hell should he spend all that time and effort to fake being drowned if he did not have something to hide? No, sir, I tell you, if he is alive he will have a lot to explain to us. If you are right, it's strange he should go away like this." To egg him on, Bartley asked, "Then what about Kent? Dunn is just as sure that he knows about the crime as you are the young man does."

"For a moment the chief did not reply. I saw his heavy face struggling with the two conflicting theories. But at last he said, "That may be true. Darned if I know. But one thing is sure, it's one of those two and it's just as apt to be that kid as the other man. Anyway, his running away seems suspicious." Then as if he had thought of it the first time, he asked:—

"How did you know where he was?"

Bartley laughed, "I don't. I am taking a chance. They told us he had a camp on Mystic Island. He was to go there with his friend Giles for a few days. Giles' boat was stolen or broke away. It's my idea Maxson took the boat and went over to his camp, intending to stay a few

days. I may be wrong, but we will soon find out."

By this time, we were skirting the length of a long island. An island almost all covered with trees except the one end which seemed to be clear. There was no sign from the sea side of any tents or camps. The chief told us this was Mystic Island.

Bartley ran the boat closer to the shore and cut off a good deal of the power. "I want you," he said to us, "to see if you can find a motor boat tied up anywhere along the shore. The boat he took is too large to be pulled up on the shore. He would have to anchor it."

For a while we skirted the side of the island, watching the shore. I could see the chief took little stock in Bartley's idea that the young man might be alive. Still he watched eagerly as the boat ran along. The island was about a mile long and on the ocean side there were no bays of any kind where a boat could be hidden. We soon turned around one end and in a moment were running along the side nearest the mainland which was about a quarter of a mile away.

I had begun to think that our search was in vain. There was not only no sign of a boat, but for that matter not a sign of life on the island. Still the heavy trees which came down to the water's edge would make it easy for any

one to hide in the midst of them. We had gone half down the west side of the island, and as we passed round a little point of land, I saw a motor boat near the shore. Bartley saw it at the same time and steered our boat toward it. As we swung round its side, I saw on the stern the word "Marjorie." The missing boat was before us.

The chief gave a long whistle as we all looked at it. Then he turned to Bartley with an admiring tone in his voice, "Darned if it don't begin to look as if you were right after all."

Saying nothing, Bartley ran to the side of the other boat and we looked within. It was the typical speed boat with only room for three persons. There was nothing within save the wrapping from some kind of a box. Bartley reached in the boat for this and the wrapper turned out to be from a well-known brand of crackers. He smiled as he looked at it.

Suddenly the chief spoke up, "That's the missing boat all right. But you are not sure that Maxson was the one that took it."

"No," came the answer, "I am not. But Pelt says that Maxson bought a lot of provisions—canned goods and crackers and the like. This wrapping shows that whoever had the boat also had some things of that kind. I think perhaps

it will turn out that I was right in saying he took it."

He steered the boat toward the sandy beach before us, shutting off the power and allowing the boat to drift slowly to the land. Climbing out, we secured the boat to a tree that stood near the water's edge. There were traces of footprints in the soil above the shore and also a little path could be discovered. A path that was barely perceptible, yet a path for all that, which ran into the woods. It did not look as if it had been used very much for only here and there could be seen the faint impression of a shoe.

We followed it, which was not a very difficult task at that. It is true we often had to bend back branches that overhung the way and once or twice step over fallen trees, but it was easy enough to follow and with Bartley in the lead we went slowly through the woods. It was clear to see that not many persons passed that way. The birds seemed rather wild flying up ahead of us as if startled by our presence. A red squirrel, running across the path, paused a second to glance at us, then plunged into the deeper woods.

We followed the path for maybe ten minutes before we found a clearing. Almost from the time we left the water's edge, the path had

wound upward. Not a very steep rise but a steady incline. When we came out on the edge of the clearing, we were really at the top of a little hill. It was an open space of several acres with the grass almost waist high. But the thing that struck us most was the large tent on the other side.

At the sight of the tent Bartley gave an expressive glance, then without a word, he plunged into the grass toward it. We made no effort to hide our approach. The thought came to me that any one would have been able to get away and hide. But when we reached the front of the tent and paused to glance at it, we found a young man there, lying on a mattress within, reading a magazine and smoking a cigarette. He did not observe us for a moment or so, his eyes intent on the story he was reading. Then, as if feeling our presence, he slowly raised his eyes. As his gaze fell upon us, a startled expression swept over his face. It flushed red, then paled. In a second, he jumped to his feet and in a rather frightened voice asked:

"What do you want?"

He was a decidedly nervous-looking youth, his hands twitching as he looked at us. His complexion was sallow and his face did not have the most pleasant expression that I have seen. In fact there was about him a rather shifty look as

if one could not trust him or even believe his word. He seemed one of those people you often meet that think the entire world is trying to injure them.

Bartley did not respond to his question for a moment, looking him in the eyes till the young man dropped his gaze and glanced away. Then in a rather dry voice he answered:—

"What do we want? Why, nothing except yourself."

The response seemed not to puzzle the young man but it did have the effect of confusing him. In fact he acted a bit frightened. For a moment he said nothing, then suddenly with a leap jumped for his coat that hung on the tent pole. Bartley jumped for him at the same time but the young man got his hand on his coat pocket and came forth with a revolver before Bartley reached him. What he intended to do with it, I could not tell. Before he could raise his hand, Bartley had him by the wrist and with a quick twist sent the revolver flying to the ground. Then taking his hand off the boy, he stood in front of him laughing.

"You poor fool," he said, "what did you expect to do with that gun?"

The answer surprised me. His face white and his voice filled with rage, the young man snapped back at him:—

"You leave me alone! Get out! You have nothing on me!"

The chief nudged me with his arm. The reply was startling in one sense. Why he should say just what he did, if he knew nothing about the murder, was rather queer. In fact his whole attitude, his attempt to get his gun, made me think that he must know something and perhaps why we were there. The chief, I knew, was sure of it. And the young man was rather frightened to say the least.

Whatever Bartley might have thought of his answer he did not say, instead he simply said to the young man:—

"Maxson, I was your uncle's friend, John Bartley. You know I have visited him several times."

If he expected the answer would cause any difference in the young man's manner, he was greatly mistaken for he snarled back:—

"What in the Devil has that to do with me?"

The answer came short and cold:— "Nothing—maybe, except your uncle was found murdered yesterday morning."

For a moment the young man looked at him as if he did not understand. Then seeing the grave look on Bartley's face, he turned and looked at the faces of the chief and me. Seeing the same answer in each of them, it suddenly dawned upon

him that Bartley was in earnest. The red-flushed face that had been filled with anger turned a sudden white and he gripped the pole of the tent for support. He gasped but one word:—

"Murdered!"

"Yes," stated the chief, "and I—" But the sentence was not finished for with a quick glance, which the boy did not see, Bartley prevented him from finishing. Instead he turned to the young man who had raised his eyes and with a frightened air was watching him.

"Yes, he was murdered. We came over here to get you and to find out why you were not home."

He seemed unable to speak. I could not tell if his fear was because of Bartley's presence or if it had been caused by the news of his uncle's death. But he was afraid of something. His hands trembled and he licked his lips with his tongue. It was not until Bartley repeated the question that he answered and it was in a low, uneven voice:—

"Why, I came—came over here to camp for a few days." Then suddenly raising his voice he half yelled, "I had a right to."

Bartley looked at him gravely, speaking slowly:— "Yes, you had a right to. But why did you try to make us think you had been

drowned? Why did you try to spoil your cousin's wedding day?"

Silence again—a silence that none of us wished to break. The young man, his head bent and eyes on the ground, would not answer and we did not care to speak. It was the chief that broke the silence. His voice was rough as he said:—

"You better answer. As it is, you are apt to be locked up till you tell us what you know of your uncle's death."

In a sudden rage the young man half stepped forward, his face red with anger. "What in Hell do you mean?" he roared. "What do I know of his death?"

"That's what I want to find out," came the short answer from the chief.

Again the young man did not reply. I saw Bartley watching him with a rather puzzled look on his face. The chief was getting angry and I had no doubt he would have arrested him on the spot if he could have. But we were in Connecticut and he had no authority there. I, myself, could only think that if the boy knew nothing of the murder, he was taking a poor way to show it. There had not been the surprise one might have expected when we told him of the death of his uncle. There had been fear, of that there was no doubt, but little signs of grief.

Again Bartley repeated the question, "Why did you try to make us think you were drowned?"

I expected the young man would answer this time. Instead he looked at Bartley and whipped back:— "What business is it of yours, anyway? No one invited you over here."

In a rather cold, crisp tone Bartley informed Maxson who he was and why he had come for him. There was little doubt he had heard of Bartley's name, and knew who he was. His attitude changed, though his face turned pale. He seemed at last willing to speak.

But even then we had to wait several moments till in a tone that seemed to show he was picking carefully what he said, he started:—

"Why, I just thought I would come over here for a few days."

He paused, paused so long that Bartley asked once more, "But why try to make them think you were drowned? Why try to spoil your cousin's wedding day? That was what you wished to do, I judge."

The young man flushed and in an angry voice retorted:—

"What if I did? It was my affair. They would never do anything for me. Suppose I did try to make them think I was drowned. There was no crime in that."

"No," drawled back the chief, "none at all,

only it so happens that it's rather odd you went away after your uncle was murdered."

The young man dropped his eyes, not meeting ours, and did not seem to care to make a reply. Still after a long silence he said, rather slowly:—

"All I wished to do was simply to throw a shock into that wedding. When I got up yesterday, I intended only to take Giles' boat and come over here, simply stay away from the wedding. But when I saw the fog and got down at the shore, I knew I could make them think I had been drowned. I simply swam out a ways, gave a yell or so, then swam back, crossed the land and got in the boat. I had it all ready."

The chief gave Bartley a look that might have expressed anything. I could see the story did not impress him very much. Bartley's face was grave though the story was exactly the theory Bartley had advanced to me when he spoke of the young man's disappearance.

In fact, after all the questions were asked, the story was the same. He simply had wished to spoil the wedding. One could tell that he was not over fond of his cousin and it seemed he must have been jealous. Yet he stuck to his story, saying that he intended to return in a few days. I judged that Bartley had been right in his theory of the young man having the "inferiority complex." Again and again he told us that he

went away because he knew his not being at the wedding would, as he put it, make a stir.

He was not over willing to return with us to the Hill. Why, I could not tell. It might have been that he realized what a fool he had made of himself. Yet somehow, I got the idea he was afraid of something. I judged Bartley had the same idea for once in a while I saw him steal a puzzled glance at Maxson. But in the end he agreed to go back.

We took him in the same boat with us, towing the other one. He sat in the stern near the chief and did not speak for a long time. There was a sullen look on his face and I could see once in a while that his hands would tremble. He never glanced at any of us, sitting sullenly watching the water, or his eyes on the bottom of the boat.

It was not till we had swung out of the sound into the bay, with the Hill only several miles away, that he spoke and the question made us all start. He tried to make his voice calm but it trembled a bit.

"Was there anything missing?"

A quick look passed between the chief and Bartley and the latter said dryly:— "Yes, $5,000 in gold pieces and a book."

I saw the boy's face whiten but he did not reply. I would have given a good deal to have known why he asked the question but he did not

say. Instead he lapsed again into silence and for a while the only sound was the exhaust of the motor and the slapping of the water against the boat.

Suddenly I saw the chief grab the young man by the arm, then slide his hand down to his wrist which he held tightly. Startled, I watched them. The chief seemed to be trying to prevent him from dropping something in the water. The struggle was short and hardly worth the name for the boy could do little against the strength of the chief. In the end, his hand was forced open and something bright dropped into the waiting hand of the chief.

For a second, I saw the chief stare at the object he held, his face a study of conflicting emotions. Then reaching what he held over to Bartley, he said:—

"I saw him trying to drop this in the water." He dropped the object into Bartley's waiting palm. I bent across to look and gave a startled glance. Then I raised my eyes and met those of Bartley. In his palm, shining in the bright sunlight was the object the young man had tried to drop in the bay. It was a fifty-dollar gold piece.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

A CONFESSION OF MURDER

FOR several moments, all I could do was to stare at the gold piece as it lay in Bartley's open hand. The expression on his face was one of mingled doubt and surprise. The chief wore a rather satisfied grin as if saying, that it had turned out just as he had expected all the time. The young man sat huddled in the stern, his eyes on the water, yet even as I looked at him I saw he was trembling. Again my eyes came back to the gold piece, wondering if the crime had been solved at last. At any rate the mystery of the taking of the box of gold pieces seemed to have been answered.

It was this thought that came to me. There seemed no doubt now that the package the young man had under his arm when he went to the bath house must have been the box of gold. The fact he tried to throw the fifty-dollar piece into the water was evidence he knew that the box was missing. I could tell by the look on the face of the chief that he was sure the motive of the crime had been found and the guilty person was in the boat with us.

Even Bartley looked perplexed as he placed the piece of gold in his pocket. He glanced at the chief, then back at the youth whose eyes did not rise to his glance. Then he said:—

"Maxson, why did you try to throw that gold piece in the water?"

The young man was silent and the question had to be repeated again. Then he raised his face. It was flushed and excited and his voice trembled as he replied:—

"Why, I—knew—" He paused, then excitedly burst forth, "Why—I was afraid—" and he fell again into silence.

"Afraid of what?" came Bartley's question.

"Why—I was afraid—afraid—that you might think I had killed my uncle."

"That's just—" burst from the chief, but he was stopped from finishing by a gesture from Bartley, who turned to the boy.

"Maxson," he said in a grave tone, "some one will be sure to say that, if they know what you tried to do. Your position is a serious one at the best. The fact you tried to run away, taken in connection with your uncle's death and the missing box of money, will make trouble for you. Your having this gold piece and trying to throw it away will be the climax of it all. You better tell us frankly all that took place and what you did."

The young man's face had turned white as Bartley spoke. It seemed to me that for the first time he realized the bad position he was in and what might be thought of this endeavor to throw away the money. It was several moments before he spoke and then it was to go back to the night of the uncle's death.

He had gone to the library after the men had left to ask his uncle for some money. Maxson had been refused, mostly it seems because he himself had been angry and, I judged, overbearing in his request. I could see that he was a queer type. There was in his mind the foolish idea that he was looked down upon, that his cousin was given things that should be his. Why he thought his uncle should do as much for him as he did for his own daughter, I could not see, that is unless Bartley's idea of his mental make-up was right. But he had quarreled with his uncle and I judged, though he did not say it, had been more than arrogant in his request for money —a request that had been denied.

He left his uncle in the little room off the library and went into the larger room, pausing to look at the wedding presents. Happening to be by one of the boxes of gold pieces, which naturally he knew about, he opened one. Then an idea struck him. He took from one of the boxes a gold piece, placing in its place a lead medal

he happened to have with him. That was his explanation of why he had the gold piece.

To all of Bartley's questions, he made the same answer. He had done this as a joke, done it because he wished his cousin to be "shocked" when she found one of the gold pieces missing and a lead medal in the box. He denied that he had taken more than one gold piece, or the box itself, saying it was on the table when he left the room. When the chief told him that the box was missing, he thought at once of the gold piece in his pocket and tried to throw it away.

I could see that the chief did not believe his explanation, for he shook his head as I glanced at him. From Bartley's look, it would have been hard to say what he thought. The story, at that, seemed almost too absurd and the reason given for having one of the missing pieces of money was one that few would believe. I expected Bartley would ask him more regarding it but instead he went on to other things.

The young man seemed eager enough to talk now and told us all we wished. In answer to the question regarding his actions after he left the library he replied that he went down to the first floor, was there a moment or so and went back to his room and to bed. The next morning he got up early and left the house, going to the

business section of the Hill where he had breakfast. He then went down to the bathing beach, but instead of going to the shore at once, he went to the bath house and undressed. Then he carried his clothes to the other side of the shore and placed them on the sand. The rest, he added, we knew—how he went out and gave a cry for aid, swimming ashore in the fog, crossing the neck of land and then getting the boat. The package under his arm he insisted, was nothing but a suit of clothes.

As his story was finished, he again lapsed into a sullen silence. It was a remarkable story and one that I doubted if any jury in the world would believe. There seemed no reason for his doing what he claimed he did and his explanation at the best seemed rather absurd. From the set look on the face of the chief, I knew he did not accept it.

But there was no time for words as we were approaching the wharf. In front of us stretched the cottages and hotels of the Hill. The water front was filled with little boats and children were paddling on the sandy beach as the boat swept in a wide circle to the wharf. I was so intent on grabbing the pier that I did not bother to glance at who might be on it. Suddenly I heard the chief exclaim, "Why! there is Dunn, I wonder what he wants?" The next second, the

boat gently struck the dock, and in a moment, I had it tied.

As we scrambled out of the boat, Dunn approached us. His eyes grew large as they fell on the young man whom the chief had by the arm. I could see that he was a bit excited as he rushed to our side. His voice shriller than usual, squeaked forth as he reached the chief:—

"Chief, I arrested Kent about two hours ago."

The chief's hand dropped from the young man's arm as he asked:— "You did! What for?"

Dunn's voice had an excited tone, "Why, about two hours ago, he came running down to the dock just a moment before the boat started for Stonington. You know, we told him not to leave the state. I knew if he got over in Stonington, out of the state, we would have a hot time getting him back. So I stopped him, asked him where he was going."

Bartley half grinned, asking, "What did he say?"

"He was mad, said it was none of my business. I reminded him about his not leaving the state and he said the state could go to the Devil. So I simply arrested him and took him up to the jail. When I searched him he had tickets for New York and a chair on the Knickerbocker Express."

I saw the chief steal a look at the young man, then his eyes came to Bartley. In them was a questioning look. The chief, I knew, was more than ever sure that the young man had committed the crime, yet his detective had arrested another man for it. What he should do, seemed to be the thing that bothered him.

It was Bartley that broke the silence, "What charge did you place against Kent?"

Dunn half grinned, "Well, if I had my way it would be murder. But I was a wise guy and have him down on the books as 'resisting an officer of the law'! I knew we could hold him a while on that."

Bartley nodded and smiled. I could see that for some unknown reason he was not surprised. Yet I, myself, was perplexed. Though Dunn had Kent in the jail, I knew that the charge he held him on meant nothing and that he believed he was the murderer. Yet the chief was convinced that the young man was the guilty one. The arrest of Kent would block the chief taking similar measures with Maxson for it would be almost impossible to hold both men. Yet it was Bartley's attitude that troubled me. He took both of the circumstances as a matter of course and I would have given a good deal to know just what he thought.

After a few moments' conversation, we left them. The chief had decided to take the young man to the town for further questioning and Bartley and the chief had talked in a low voice for several moments. When they finished, he went over to Maxson and spoke to him. I could not hear what he said but I noticed the frightened look left the young man's eyes and he went with the chief willingly.

We came from the dock into the Main Street, now crowded with cars and people. The afternoon parade was on and we noticed almost every one riding down the long street. But I was eager to get Bartley's opinion about the young man and told him so.

For a while he said nothing, then suddenly asked:— "Do you see that dog?" He pointed up the street. About a block away was a shepherd dog, a country dog that had missed his master's team. It needed but a glance to see that the dog was lost. First he would run a few feet, stop and look around. Then as if not wishing to call attention to the fact that he was worried, he would run a few feet further and stop and look around again. His eyes were turned on every one that passed and in them was a worried expression as he once more started to run a few feet away. As the dog came near us, Bartley

called him over to his side and the dog thrust his nose into his hand.

"Pelt," came the unexpected reply, "to me there is nothing more pathetic than the sight of a country dog lost in the city. How bravely he will try to hide his fear by making believe he knows where he is going. How eagerly he glances at every passer-by, hoping it is his master; and how sorrowful is the look in his eyes as he realizes that he is lost, that his God has gone." He paused, stroking the brown head of the dog, then continued, "Maxson makes me think of this dog."

"He does?" I asked in surprise.

"Yes, he does. He is that nervous, neurotic type that tries to hide his fear of the world under a brave front. No one knows how much that type of people suffer in this matter-of-fact world. The chief thinks his story is absurd. It may not all be true, but it's not absurd. The things he did, his seeking for 'compensation' are all true to type. He would do the things he claims to have done and for the reason he gave. It's true to all modern psychology."

We had started up the long hill to the hotel and the dog was at Bartley's heels. He had found a friend and was going to stick. Bartley laughed when I mentioned it, saying that he

would take care of the dog till the owner was found. He reached down as he spoke to give the animal a little slap. Then he came back to Maxson.

"Maxson," he said, "will have a good many things to explain. He will find that few believe what he says. Yet I think the young man tells the truth. True, his nature is a cruel one. He wished to harm his cousin, but when all is said and done, he is not responsible for that. It's that 'inferiority complex' that I spoke about. Perhaps this will drive it from him, a shock often does—and he certainly has had a shock."

"But what about Kent?" I asked.

He was thoughtful, then answered, "As I said last night, Pelt, you know all that I do. He may have killed Rice, he may not have. The evidence is strong, his explanation seems weak. But the case against Maxson is just as strong and his explanation just as weak. This arrest of Kent will make trouble for he has money. By to-morrow you will see the big criminal lawyers down and then the fun will start."

We had reached the hotel and I went up to the room to wash, Bartley taking the dog round to the porter to be cared for and fed. It was some time before he returned and the first thing he did was to bathe and change into a suit of white flannels. This done, with a little sigh he

sank into his chair and read for several hours.

When we came out of the dining room after dinner, I bought several papers and we went out on the wide veranda, seating ourselves near the sun parlor. For a moment I glanced at the smooth sea, silent and still under the evening sun. Then I turned to the papers.

The local paper had a long account of the inquest and summed it all up by saying that the testimony threw no light on the crime. This was rather a surprise, till it dawned on me that Kent's great wealth was enough to throw all suspicion away from him in the eyes of a local reporter. The New York papers went a great deal further. They told frankly the evidence, saying that it seemed a case in which the guilt could point to one of two parties. Strangest of all, there was not one word in the local paper regarding the arrest of Kent. I remarked about this as I tossed the paper over to Bartley. He read the article before he spoke, then in an amused tone replied:—

"It looks to me, Pelt, that Kent's wealth has started to work. I have no doubt that he has some good lawyer on the case now. They would threaten the paper with libel suits if they mentioned his name overmuch. That's why you don't see much about it."

Just at that moment, a tall distinguished man

stopped by our sides and slapped Bartley on the shoulder. He looked up, saying but a word, "Billings."

The bookdealer was known the country over, perhaps it's better to say the world. He was a buyer for a few rich men, men whose money enabled them to purchase what they wished. A tall man with a humorous face that was always smiling. He dropped into a chair by our side.

Bartley turned to him, saying, "Billings, I wanted to see you and ask you a few questions."

The bookdealer, lighting a cigarette, only said "Shoot!"

"When Rice took you men up to his library, what were you talking about?"

"Why, that Aretino. He went right into his small room and brought it out. I remember he said 'It's a pretty small book to be worth $30,000.' We were talking about that till he opened it, and showed it to us. The butler came in just then for a moment and Rice went over to speak to two men. But they went right out and all of our conversation came back to the book. We only stayed a few moments."

"Did Kent express himself regarding the book?"

Billings laughed, "He sure did. Said it was a fake, that if he had seen the engravings he

would not have taken it even if it was the only copy in the world." There came into his voice the tone of an expert. "That was, of course, foolish, for the book is worth $30,000."

Bartley glanced at him, "You know it's gone?"

The bookdealer studied his hands for a few moments, replying in a dry voice, "So I hear. It's rather foolish to think of. The book cannot be sold and the only thing one could do would be to place it in some collection. Even then it would not be sold or even shown for that matter."

The conversation went back and forth, being mostly about books. I listened but did not speak, the talk being a bit too technical for me. In about an hour, Billings excused himself and left. Just as he went around the corner, a bell boy came up to Bartley and told him he was wanted on the phone.

I spent the time till he returned, watching several torpedo boats speeding down the sound, bound for Newport. Next I listened to the rather inane talk of two women near me who did not try to lower their voices. I was aroused by Bartley's hand on my shoulder.

I glanced up. The expression on his face was one of amusement and yet surprise, as he stood looking down at me. "Pelt," he said, "we must go to Westerly." Seeing that he had not fin-

ished, I waited for his next words. They came in a low tone, after a glance to see that no one could hear.

"That telephone call was from the chief. He is up in the air now for fair. He just got an unsigned letter."

He smiled and I asked, "An unsigned letter?"

He nodded, then half laughed, "Yes, an unsigned letter! In it some one confesses that he killed Rice!"

CHAPTER TWELVE

A FLASH IN THE DARK

IT was some time after we left the Hill that I ventured to ask Bartley, who was driving the car, what he thought of the chief's message. To me, it had been perhaps the most unexpected thing that could have happened. I had long since made up my mind that either Kent or Maxson would be charged with the murder in the end. I was unable to decide which one it would be because the evidence seemed equally strong against either one of them, though I leaned a little toward thinking that Kent was the guilty man. But now, some one had confessed that he had killed Rice. If it was true, then all our theories were wrong. I said as much to Bartley.

He listened gravely enough to what I ventured, not replying till I had finished. Then he simply grinned as he replied, "It's all true what you say, Pelt; the chief's message is something we did not expect. Still you want to remember that, in every mysterious murder, there are always letters saying that the writer committed the deed. In the Elwell case alone, I under-

stand there were over twenty letters of that kind from as many different people all of whom claimed to have killed him. This may be of that sort."

"But why," I suggested, "should any one say he committed a murder if he has not?"

He laughed, "Oh, it's the psychological make-up of the persons writing them craving for notoriety, perhaps. Then again, I have no doubt that a good many of the letters come from people who are unbalanced."

It was only a short drive to the town. The road wound by a little river for a ways, a mere thread of a river, flowing between green fields and tree-covered banks. Then for a while the road swept up a long steady incline, dropping down at last into the chief residential street of the town; a street with great elm trees on each side, whose branches formed an arch of leaves above our heads. In a few moments we had run past the colonial houses, each with its lawn and gayly colored garden, and had turned into the heart of the town itself.

We stopped in front of the court house, a massive building of granite, which also contained the jail. Across from us was a great park with its close-cropped grass and a fountain playing in the evening air. A band concert had started and the park was filled with strolling couples,

the music coming faintly to our ears as we climbed the steps of the court house.

The chief was in his office, seated back of a great desk. Dunn was leaning over its surface and eagerly talking with him. The chief rose with an air of relief as we came in. He reached across the desk for a piece of paper, handing it to Bartley, saying, "I found this darned thing, when I got up here this afternoon."

Bartley read it, passing it at last to me with a quizzical look. It was a single sheet of typewritten paper, but with no date and of course unsigned. It read:—

"Chief, you think you have the man that killed Rice at the Hill but you are wrong, as you are most times. You can let that man go, he did not kill him, he could have, but he did not. I tell you so. I killed HIM, I came in the house, just after that man Kent, and hid back of the big curtains down-stairs, till he came out, then I went up in the elevator. I went in the room, and killed him with a cane. God told me to do it. He was one of those men that grind the poor, he deserved to be killed."

It was a queer letter at the best. The language seemed that of an uneducated man and perhaps a deranged man. The sentences had no construction, still that might have been purposely done. I could not help but notice that the

details of the house were very meager. Any one reading the newspaper story of the crime could have secured all the information that was in the letter.

The chief had watched both of us and, as I placed the letter back on the table, he said:—

"I don't know if there is anything in it. But at least the writer said he killed Rice and I would like to get my hands on him. The papers will raise Cain over it, anyway."

Bartley picked the letter up from the table and looked at it again. Then he turned to the chief. "I think, chief, when you do lay your hands on the man that wrote this letter, you will find he is some one mentally deranged. You notice he said 'God told me to do it.' No normal person would say that, a religious fanatic might. Then again, Rice never 'ground down the poor.' His wealth was made honestly and those that worked for him, loved him. He did not have an enemy in the world that I ever heard of. Of course there is one chance in a million that the writer told the truth. That's the only reason to be interested in the letter. You ought to get him."

"But—" broke in Dunn, "how can we get him when we don't know who wrote it?"

Bartley grinned, "That should be easy, Dunn. You have the envelope the letter came in. It's

stamped the time it was received at the Post Office. If it was dropped in a box at the Post Office, the stamping would tell about the time. If a carrier brought it in it would be even easier."

"Easier?" asked the chief in wonder.

"Sure, easier. The carriers get in at different times. You only have four or five anyway. Just as soon as they get in, the mail picked up by the carrier from the boxes is stamped with the time received. All you have to do in that case is find out which carrier brought it in, and then watch the boxes. There can't be more than three on each route."

"Do you think there will be any more letters?" came the question.

Bartley nodded, "Of course there will. If the man is deranged, if there is a little mental weakness, there will be other letters. All you have to do is to watch the boxes."

Dunn turned to the chief, "I will look after that. Let me take the envelope and I will go over to the Post Office."

The chief rummaged in his desk, finally finding the envelope which he gave to Dunn. The detective glanced at it for a moment before he left the room. After his departure, the chief turned to Bartley. His face wore a troubled look and I could tell he seemed to be disturbed.

"Mr. Bartley," he said, "this case has got my

goat. Down-stairs that man Kent is howling his head off. He says he will sue the town and threatens to have me thrown out of my job. He had me get a lawyer, Judge Grant, and the Judge has sent off a bunch of telegrams, where I do not know."

Bartley simply grinned, but said nothing. Lighting his old black pipe, the chief continued:—

"Darned if I know what to think. The evidence against Kent is strong enough to hold him for a while. Then that young man told the wildest yarn I ever heard in my life. I don't see how any one can believe all that stuff he got off about running away in order to frighten that cousin of his. That fifty-dollar gold piece he was trying to throw overboard when I grabbed it, and his story about taking just one from the box looks fishy." He paused and gave a sigh.

I half smiled. The chief was bewildered and, for that matter, so was I. The crime had developed angles that were over his head and with the two conflicting theories before him, he did not know where to turn. He shifted his heavy frame in his chair and looked appealingly at Bartley, his big eyes sober and tired. Yet I could not help liking him for his good nature and frankness.

But Bartley did not give him much satisfac-

tion. They talked the thing over for a while, but reached no conclusion. The chief informed us that Maxson had answered all his questions, but had nothing new to tell. The boy had acted frightened and nervous, but I could well understand why he should be. After questioning him, the chief had let him go back to the Hill, Maxson promising to report to him the next day. Then rising from his chair, he stated the District Atorney wished to see us.

He took us to the next floor, opening the door of an office. The walls were lined with countless law books and a number of green filing cases. By an open window, smoking, sat a man of about forty who rose when the chief entered and came to our side. He turned out to be the District Attorney and, after introducing us, the chief left the room.

It took but a moment for the lawyer, who told us his name was Wilcox, to discover that both he and Bartley were Harvard men, a fact which seemed to place them on good footing at once. He motioned us to several chairs by the window, and we seated ourselves.

For a second he said nothing. There floated through the window the strains of a popular song played by the band, and the snatches of conversation from the people in the park across the street. Then he spoke:—

"Mr. Bartley," he said, "my office don't as a rule mix up in a criminal case till after the indictment has been brought in. But this case seems rather unusual and I thought you would be willing to give me some information." Bartley simply nodded, and the attorney went on:—

"Both Dunn and the chief have told me the grounds on which they are holding Kent. He is, as you know, wealthy and has powerful friends. They seem strong enough, in fact I might add, that I think with even the evidence they now hold against him, I could get a conviction before a jury."

He paused, looking at Bartley as if he wished confirmation for this statement. Bartley agreed, saying nothing else. The lawyer played with his cigar, his face thoughtful, then he continued:—

"But I find that the chief thinks he has almost as strong a case against the young man. In fact if it were not that Kent is already in a cell, I think the chief would have arrested Maxson."

He looked at his hand a moment, then smiled, "But they cannot both be guilty of the crime. In fact the evidence is so conflicting, so strong against each one, that I wished to ask you—." He paused, as if not wishing to finish his sentence, and when he went on I judged that he had

decided not to say what he wished, for he continued:—

"So far as I can see, there are but two theories. One is that some person killed Rice for the book that is missing."

He glanced at Bartley and smiled, adding, "I am a bookman myself in a small way, Mr. Bartley, but hardly in your class. I looked up what I could find about Aretino and I can see where the book that is missing can be worth $30,000. Still again, the box of money is missing. The chief told me you claim that it's hardly likely Kent would take the money, or the young man the book."

He paused for Bartley's answer. Instead of answering him, Bartley said with a smile:—

"What was the question you wished to ask me?"

"Why," came the half-embarrassed answer, "I wanted to know if you had any suspicion of some other person beside the two I named, or any facts the police do not know."

Bartley was silent a long while, his face thoughtful. When he replied, he spoke slowly as if picking his words. "Mr. Wilcox, that is a question which ordinarily I would not care to answer, but I will under the circumstances. As a rule I work out my cases my own way. I see

the position you are in with Kent locked up and threatening trouble and a doubt in your mind regarding the young man."

He stopped a moment to light a cigar, then continued:— "I will tell you frankly, I have no person under suspicion except those two. I have several little theories perhaps, which have little to go on, but they point to no particular person. In fact, all the evidence is circumstantial, it all points to either Kent or the young man. They may both be innocent, the rather remarkable stories of both may be true. They may both be untrue."

"But," started the lawyer.

"But," smiled Bartley, "they cannot both be guilty, you were going to say. That is true. Yet it is possible that Kent could have killed my friend and Maxson might have taken the money, but I don't know. I have a foolish idea back in my mind that perhaps we don't know anything about the real murderer. But so far, I have nothing except a few vague theories which do not seem to be connected with any person at all."

Silence fell again, broken only by the faint sound of the music from the band and the sound of an automobile horn from the street. I could see the lawyer was troubled. He may have thought Bartley would tell him that he had an

idea of who the murderer might be. I knew from what Bartley had said that he knew no more than I, who had killed Rice. This was what seemed to trouble the lawyer, for he said:—

"I thought, Mr. Bartley, you might have some clue that the local police had overlooked."

He shook his head slowly, "No, so far they know as much as I do. Any one can draw his own conclusions from the evidence we have. Dunn may be right, the chief may be right. The only thing I can say is, that whoever wrote the letter saying he had killed Rice, did not tell the truth."

We stayed a while longer, talking of many things, but reaching no further solution. The District Attorney advised us he had seen Kent when Dunn brought him in. He laughed a bit as he told us how angry the man had been and how he had demanded a lawyer at once. Kent had threatened them with all kinds of lawsuits but he never said he did not kill Rice. He had told the District Attorney that he must have forgotten his cane and had been wrong when he said it was at his house. But aside from that, he had said nothing new.

It was long after ten when we left the court house and went out to the car. The concert was over and only a few young couples were on the street. The night, which had been so fine

when we left the Hill, had changed. The moon was behind dark clouds, the wind was rising and it seemed that we were in for another storm. Just as we were about to get into the car, who should come to our side but Dunn.

He told us they had found out when the letter came into the Post Office and who had brought it. It had been picked up by a carrier who had the eastern section of the town for his route. He brought the letter in about four o'clock. There was no doubt about that for the letter was stamped five minutes past four. Dunn then informed us there were but three mail boxes on the carrier's route and that it should not be difficult to pick up the person who mailed it; that was, if he wrote another one.

An automobile went by us at that moment and I saw Bartley's eyes follow it. At the head of the street it turned in the direction of the Hill. He even gave a low whistle but I could not tell why. In a moment he turned back to Dunn and we talked together for fifteen or more minutes.

It was not till we had gotten out of the town and were running down the long hill by the cemetery, that Bartley turned to say:—

"Did you see who was in the car that passed while Dunn was talking?"

I had to confess that I had not and with a little laugh he simply said:—

"Maxson and Mr. Rice's secretary, Miss Long."

He said nothing else and for my part, I asked no questions. Why the young woman, whom I had taken a liking to, should have been with Maxson, I would have given a good deal to know. She must have heard that he was suspected of taking the money. She did know that he was presumed to have been drowned. What they had in common bothered me for I could not but think of Dunn's remark, "The girl was in the room all day alone. She had a chance to take the book."

By the time we reached the Hill, I had decided to stop thinking about it. Bartley had informed me he would drive down around Rice's place, it being just as short a distance to the garage that way as any other. I knew no one was at the house. The funeral had been held in New York that afternoon and the whole household, including all the servants, had gone to attend it. Faith and her husband were to return in the morning and close the house for the summer.

We swept down a little hill, then up a steeper one. For some reason the electric lights at this part of the resort were all out, though from the top of the hill we were on, I could see they were all lighted in other sections. I judged there must be some wire trouble that had plunged the Point into darkness. Not only were the lights

all out, but the moon was hidden and the clouds were heavy. Far off, I could hear the surf starting to pound on the shore under the rising wind.

Rice's estate was the last one on the point of land. One side had the bay before it and back of the house the river formed the boundary of his land. There were no houses within several hundred yards of his and, in fact, the nearest one was around a little bend in the road.

Bartley slowed the car down as we swept around the bend. Before us, though some little distance from the road, loomed the dark form of the house, silent and massive. As we swept slowly past it, both of us turned to look.

Suddenly Bartley gave a start and grabbed my arm.

"Pelt," he cried, his voice eager, "did you see that?"

"What?" I gasped.

"That light! That house is presumed to be deserted, with every one in New York. Yet as I looked back, I caught the merest flash of a light. It was on the first floor."

"A light!" came my startled tone, "What can it be?"

"Yes, a light! It may be the mere flash of an electric torch. Some one is in the house. And we must find out why."

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

GOLD AND ASHES

IF I had expected Barley would at once stop the car, I was mistaken. Instead he drove round the bend in the road till the house was hidden from our sight. Then he ran to the side of the road and stopped the car near a house. We jumped from the car in haste, Bartley going to the rear of the machine, where he fumbled for the torch and gun that he always carried there. Finding them, he slipped them into his pocket before he spoke.

"Pelt," came his voice, "I don't know just what we may find in the house. I only know that no one is presumed to be there. The family is at the funeral and all the servants with them. But I saw the flash of a light and there is someone there—after something."

"Maybe it's Maxson?" I suggested.

"No, if it were he, the lights would be on. This light I saw was flashed on only for a second. Only the angle we happened to be in at the time, enabled me to see it at all. Then again, Maxson has no desire to stay alone in the house where

his uncle was murdered. He told me that, and I doubt if he even has a key."

We started away from the car. Bartley stopped me just before we came to the bend of the road and, placing his hand on my shoulder, said:— "Pelt, there maybe a lookout placed around the house. Lucky for us the lights on the street are out and it's dark. But they may flash on at any moment. It's my suggestion we come up to the house by the side and then carefully try the windows.

We stood silent a moment as we came to the bend in the road, glancing up and down. There was no one in sight. It would have been rather difficult to have seen any one, for the night was very dark and the trees on each side of the street cast dark shadows. Hurriedly we stole across the road, entering the gloom of the trees. Before us stretched the few acres of land that formed the estate, grounds broken by shrubs and little garden spots. The space was dark and silent.

Rather slowly, half walking, half running, we reached the little hedge that ran around the house. We crouched in its shadows for a moment, peering at the great form of the dark house that loomed up before us. It stood ghostly and silent. There did not seem the slightest sign of life, though we eagerly watched the windows.

If Bartley had seen a light while in the car, he did not see any sign of one as we crouched beneath the hedge. The house seemed empty. We stooped lower as an automobile went sweeping down the road, its headlight splitting the darkness with a ray of light.

It was still. After the roar of the passing car died away, all I could hear was the sound of the wind in the branches of the trees and the far-off rumble of the surf on the shore. Not only was the house without a sign of life, but we had failed to find the slightest trace of any person around the grounds.

Bartley's hand on my arm made me give a jump, but as I turned, I dimly saw him motion to follow him. Finding a gap in the hedge, we slipped through and with a light run, reached the side of the house. Against its granite sides, we were lost in the shadows and I doubted if any one would have been able to see us. Bartley led the way around the side of the house, to the veranda in the front. Reaching it, he pulled himself from the ground to the floor, I climbing after him. It was darker even on the veranda than it had been on the ground, but in a second I dimly made out the great windows.

Going to the windows, we both carefully peered into the room. That is to say we tried to, but the room was black, with not the slightest

suspicion of a light. I could just make out Bartley's shadow and I saw his arms reach up. From the faint sound, I knew he was trying the window but he could not open it. The catch was on. In a moment, he softly went to the massive door, tried the knob and discovered that it also was locked. Back at my side he paused, and whispered:—

"We can, of course, get in by the window, Pelt, but I have an idea to try something else. Come along."

He went to the railing of the veranda and climbing over dropped to the ground. In a second I was at his side, following him around the side of the house. He went to the rear, where we paused. This time we were under a small piazza that went up to the second story. Though we had carefully watched the windows along the side and in the rear of the house, we saw nothing.

Here Bartley informed me what he intended to do. From the ground, it was possible to reach the top of the little stoop which would bring one to the second story of the building. There was a window which could be forced open. Once in the house, it would be an easy matter to reach the main floor. He added that the person who had shown the light would scarcely expect any one to come from the second floor.

He climbed up the side of the piazza, being aided by the trellis work which supported some vines. In a moment I stood beside him, twenty feet from the ground. It seemed strange to see the rest of the Hill lighted while around the section we were in there was a circle of darkness. From where I was I could even see the lights of a ship far out to sea.

But I glanced only a moment, for Bartley was working on the window. No doubt he was using a little piece of steel to slip the catch. In a second I heard the little click which told that this was done. Softly and slowly he raised the window and climbed within. As I was following him, reaching with my feet for the floor, I almost slipped on the smooth sides of a bath tub. We had entered the house by a bathroom.

For the merest part of a second Bartley flashed the light of his torch on the walls. The bathroom door was closed. This was about all I saw for darkness fell again. As his hand went out for the knob, he whispered:— "We will land out in the hall, Pelt, and I want to get to the head of the stairs that lead down into the great living room on the first floor."

Slowly and so softly that I did not hear a sound, he flung open the door. We stood listening a while. Not a sound could be heard and only the deep blackness of the long hall stretched

before us. Groping his way ahead of me, Bartley crept silently along the passage. I followed with my hands brushing the walls for support. The hall could not have been very long, yet in the darkness it seemed never to end. But at length we were peering over the railings of the stairway.

Down below us was the great living room that I had first entered the day we heard Rice was dead. The stairs led directly into it, with a landing halfway down from which the stairs ran on two sides to the first floor. From where we were we could, if it had been light, have taken in the whole room below. Now all was silent and our eyes were unable to pierce the deep gloom.

We stood there for a while, waiting. What Bartley expected to find, I could not tell. I, myself, had begun to wonder if he might not have been mistaken regarding a light. So far, there had been not the slightest sign that any one was in the house. We had seen nothing and it was as silent as the proverbial tomb.

Suddenly, he clutched my arm, whispering, "Listen!" There came to my ears a faint sound more like the running of a motor than anything else. A sound, distant, far away and faint. Yet I could hear it plainly. It lasted at least a moment, then died away and silence fell again.

"What was it?" I whispered.

Bartley's hand was on my arm and he replied in a low tone, "Why, it was the elevator. There is no doubt of it, and—" Suddenly he paused, and I felt his hand increase the pressure on my arm.

The sound had started again. This time it seemed more like a faint rumble than anything else. It was true that it was faint. Yet in the silence it could be heard plainly. This time I had no difficulty in knowing that it must be the elevator. And all at once, I realized that we were not alone in the house. Some one else was there and using the elevator.

But if it was the elevator, the next question, of course, was not only who might be running it, but to what floor he was going. As we had heard it twice, I judged that perhaps some one had gone to the upper floors and then returned. However, if that were so, he had spent no time on any floor but must have descended at once.

I knew that the wedding gifts had all been removed and were no longer in the library. But there must have been many thousands of dollars worth of old and rare manuscripts there. Could the person in the house be some one that was trying to steal the manuscripts and books, someone who knew the family was away? Or was it simply a thief that had happened to come? I threw that thought away at once. No thief, un-

less he knew the house well, would know about the elevator. I remembered how as we stood before it, when the butler took us first to the main floor, that I had been unable even to see a sign of a door in the wall. Whoever was running the elevator must be some one that knew his way about the house.

The noise had died away again and I whispered these theories to Bartley. His only reply was to tell me that he was going to the third floor, asking me to keep watch of the floor beneath us. In a second he left my side, saying he would be back in a short time, and I was alone.

For a while I peered down at the living room, as if the very eagerness of my look could pierce the darkness. But all was silent. As I waited, waiting I knew not for what, the stillness and darkness began to affect me. I could almost feel the blackness press in on me, heavy sultry darkness that seemed to stifle me. I strained my ears for any sound and at times almost held my breath as I thought for a second I heard something. And then all at once it dawned upon me that I would cut a sorry figure if I did see any one. I was without a gun and there was no doubt that whoever was in the house would be armed.

The seconds seemed endless and I began to

wonder what had happened to Bartley. No sound came from the floor above, so I judged that he had found nothing. And then all at once, when I expected it least, a sound floated up from the dark floor beneath me.

For a moment I felt my hand tremble on the railing where it rested. For the sound had come from almost directly under me. The sound of a person moving across the floor, some one that had half stumbled but had not fallen. Some one was on the main floor, there was no doubt of that.

My first thought was to go and let Bartley know, but I saw in a second that would be absurd. I did not know where he was, only the fact he had intended to go to the third floor. I did not even know just where the stairs were and, if I left my place to find him, the person below could get away.

Then I decided to go slowly and softly down the stairs till I reached the landing halfway down. That would bring me nearer to the floor and also enable me to hear better. So without stopping to think if it was a wise thing to do, I started slowly down the stairs.

I picked my way very carefully, taking some time to bring each foot down on the next step. My hand I pushed ahead of me on the railing for support as I felt my way along. At each step I

paused, listening to hear if the person below had moved. Strange to say, after the first sound I had heard nothing. Yet I knew some one was there, I could feel, it seemed, the presence of the person below. Some psychological something told me that, though I no longer could hear a sound, there was some one below me.

I had reached the landing. That is to say, I had one foot on it, when the most unexpected thing in the world happened. I had been pushing my hand ahead of me on the rail. Its smooth surface gave me a certain sense of support. To my surprise, the rail suddenly ended and my hand slipped off into space.

Not expecting the rail to end, and with one foot in the air, I lost my balance. I tried to regain the rail without making a sound. But in vain. I clutched at it, missed, lost my balance and fell with a crash. In the position I had been in, I not only fell, but fell off the landing, coming down with a crash on the first step. Then tumbling and rolling down the eight or nine steps, I landed at the bottom with a crash that I thought must have shaken the house.

Dimly, as I gathered myself together, I thanked my lucky stars that I had not broken my neck. Yet after all my position was not a very enviable one. There was no need to keep silent any longer. The crash I made as I came tum-

bling down the stairs, was enough to give testimony that I was present. Still as I rose to my feet, I had the idea that the person in the room was more anxious perhaps than I, not to be seen.

I had risen to my feet, feeling a bit sore for it seemed that every part of me had hit some section of the stairs as I fell. I stood listening, but heard nothing. Hardly knowing what to do, I decided to find the stairs and go up again. The fall, however, must have confused me for though I groped several steps in the direction where I judged the stairway must be, I did not find it. In a moment, I knew that I was lost in the room. Just as much lost as I would have been if I were thrown into the heart of China.

The more steps I took, the more bewildered I became. I could not even tell in what direction the windows were, and as for the way I was headed, I did not know. I stopped several times, trying to get the sense of direction, yet failing each time. I stood silent the last time for several moments, listening for a sound. Not hearing any, I turned completely around and slowly started off again. Then suddenly I ran into something.

Mere instinct caused me to throw out my arm for protection. It brushed against a man's coat. I felt behind it the heavy, thick-set body and heard the startled breathing. The next mo-

ment a hand grasped my arm, which I managed to throw aside. But in a second more, I was clasped by the arms of the man and the fight was on.

It must have been a queer battle. Neither of us could see the other nor for that matter make out even a form. Rather vainly we struggled for a few seconds there in the dark and my idea was that each of us was trying far more to get away than to injure the other. The person I was struggling with, I could tell, was much heavier than myself and of greater strength. One of his arms was about my body, the other held my arm. Slowly but surely he was pushing me back, though I struggled and tried to grasp his throat. Once my hand crept over his collar to the flesh of his neck, only to be thrown aside. At last by a burst of strength, I managed to break away from his grip and then hit out with my fist. My hand struck somewhere around his chest. As it brushed his coat, something seemed to ring with a little clinking sound and in pulling away my hand tore the pocket of his coat.

Suddenly I sensed that he was drawing a gun from his pocket. I had little chance against his strength—against a gun I had none at all. I had sense enough to give a loud cry which I thought might bring Bartley from the floor

above. Next I quickly sprung aside and softly dropped to the floor. On my hands and knees I started to crawl as far away from where I had been as I could.

Before I had gone several feet, there came the sharp bark of the gun and a spit of flame broke the darkness. It had been aimed at the place where I had stood a second before. Another shot rang out, as I throwing aside all desire for silence, crept across the floor as fast as I could. I bumped into a great divan and crawled around, placing it between me and the gun.

I could hear the man walking across the floor and it seemed he was going away from me. Just as I realized he was working toward the windows, I heard a slight sound on the stairs above and knew that Bartley was coming. No doubt he had heard the report of the gun and was coming as silently as he could. The next second there came the sound of breaking glass and of a window being raised. Then as if throwing aside all desire for secrecy, I heard Bartley running down the steps. In a second the shaft of his light was piercing the darkness and playing over the room.

In an anxious tone, he called, "Pelt, where are you?"

I rose to my feet and answered. Evidently he knew where the button of the lights was, for the

next second the room was flooded with light. Coming after the dense darkness, it caused me to blink for a while.

When I became accustomed to the brightness, I found Bartley gazing at me with a rather bewildered expression on his face. "What under heavens happened to you?" he asked.

In a few words I told him how I had slipped on the stairs, falling to the bottom, and of my struggle in the room. He nodded in an approving way as I told him how I had crept away on the floor as soon as I realized the man had a gun. He listened without a word to my short story, then went over to the window.

The window was half open and the glass was broken above the lock. Bits of glass were lying on the heavy rug. The sound I heard had been the man opening the window, evidently breaking the glass in his haste. I knew the window had been locked when we tried it from the veranda.

Going back to the center of the room, Bartley gazed at me in a curious way, suddenly saying:—

"What's the matter with your coat?"

I glanced down at it. To my surprise it was white in spots as if the person I had struggled with had something on his hands. Against the front of my coat was a splotch of white and also,

Bartley said, on my back and shoulder. I touched the place with my fingers and looked at it. It seemed to be nothing but ashes and I said as much.

"Ashes?" said Bartley in a doubting tone. He came and examined the coat, looking at the spots upon it. He even scraped some of the dirt off. His voice was curious as he replied, "You are right, Pelt, it is ashes. I wonder—" and then suddenly he paused and stooped down to the floor.

As he rose he simply extended his hand to me, saying, "These were at your feet."

I looked, my eyes growing big with wonder. For there in his open palm, looking rather small, yet bright, were three fifty-dollar gold pieces.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

WE MEET WITH SEVERAL SURPRISES

IT was with an exclamation of surprise that I gazed at the gold pieces lying in Bartley's extended palm. Then, as if expecting to see the floor covered with them, I looked at the rug. But there were no more to be seen. Bartley jingled them in his hand for a while, then placed them in his pocket.

Suddenly I remembered the little sound I heard when my hand had caught on the pocket of the man's coat. I told Bartley, who listened eagerly. When I finished, he said:—

"That jingle must have been money that he had in his pocket. You say that your hand caught in the pocket of the coat and you are sure that you tore it in getting away. No doubt that caused these three pieces of gold to fall to the floor."

"But," I answered, "it means then that the person who stole the box of money was the same person that I struggled with."

"It looks so. Who else would have had fifty-dollar gold pieces with him under such circumstances? I would say perhaps the box of money

is hidden somewhere in the house. The person, knowing the family was away, thought this was a good time to get it. I think the ashes will aid us in locating the box."

I glanced at the white places on my coat, wondering how a few ashes could give any information regarding the hiding place of the missing box. I said as much. He smiled, replying:— "Think it over, Pelt. Here it is the middle of the summer. The days are warm, very hot in fact. Your man must have had ashes on his hands and coat. Of course he had to be where they were to get them. Now what does that tell you?"

"Why," I replied, "from what you say he must have been in the cellar."

"Certainly! And that's where we are going."

Leaving the electric lights on in the room, he led the way to a door and passed into a hallway. At the end of the hall, he opened another door. There was a pair of stairs which we went down, coming out in a dining room. The room was really in the basement and I judged was the servants' dining room. Pushing through it, we came into a kitchen, where we did not stop. He opened another door and turned on the light.

Before us stretched the cellar. It was a long room with a concrete floor. As we went down its length I could see barrels and boxes of all

kinds. It seemed to be used far more as a store room than anything else. If Bartley was looking for a pile of ashes, he did not find one. In fact there was but little coal in the coal bin and no sign of ashes at all.

After discovering this, he paused for a moment, his brow thoughtful. Across from us was a large furnace the door of the pit half open. As his eyes fell on it he gave a little laugh and went over to its side. Bending down he glanced carefully at the floor, then called to me.

"We won't have to go any further," he said. "Look at the floor, some one has been here."

Before the open door of the furnace I could see traces of ashes—gray against the clean floor of the cellar. It looked as if some one had tried to sweep them up, for I could see the marks of a broom. In fact leaning against the side of the furnace was a broom, as if it had just been placed there.

Bartley rose and looked around the cellar. He found a long poker, got on his knees and poked in the ash pit with a long piece of iron. Then suddenly throwing the poker down, he plunged his hand into the pit and, after fumbling around for a moment came out with something. It was covered with ashes, gray and dusty, but as he rose to his feet with a little smile on his lips I saw that it was a mahogany box.

He had found the box of money, there was no doubt of that.

He took it over to a bench that was under a light. I followed him. Flinging open the lid we peered eagerly within. There, before our eyes, were rows of shining gold pieces. It needed only a look to tell that some of them had been taken, for while the bottom rows were in firm ranks, in the top of the box the money was loose and scattered. We both looked for a second, then he turned.

"Well," he drawled, "here is the missing box. Some of the money is gone, about a third of it, I would say."

There was no doubt he was right. Yet I could not help but wonder why the box had been hidden in such a strange place. I voiced my thought. He smiled as he replied:— "It was a very clever place to hide it. If you had never tumbled down those stairs, I doubt if we would ever have thought of looking there for it. Think of it! Where could you find a better place? This furnace is used only in the late fall, never in the summer. The person who took the box thought that under the ashes in the pit, it would be secure. No one would think of looking for it there, and the pit would probably not be cleaned until fall. It was a safe place to hide the box of money."

He thrust his hands into the box, picking up some of the gold and letting it fall through his fingers. It fell with a little clinking sound pleasant to hear. He turned to me:—

"All the money is not here. I judge that man took what he wished, placing it in his pocket. You heard it jingle as you hit him. No doubt he figured that it was safe enough in the ashes and he could get it at any time."

"Do you think," I ventured, "it might have been Maxson?"

Instead of answering he turned and looked at the box, bending over as if to count the money. When he raised up he replied:—

"That lead medal he said he placed in here, is not in the box. As for Maxson, I don't know. You say the man seemed heavier than yourself and stronger. Maxson is not as heavy as you and by no means as strong. Of course the darkness and the fact that you were struggling may have caused you to be mistaken regarding the person's weight and strength."

This was true. I realized that the excitement of the struggle and my thoughts at the time could have caused me to be mistaken regarding the person I was fighting with. Still I was pretty sure the man had been heavier than myself, and I knew by the pressure of his arms that he was strong. If that was so, it did not seem

possible it could have been the young man. Yet, of course, I did not know. I said so.

Bartley listened, agreeing with me. He was feeling rather pleased over finding the money and smiled several times as he glanced at the box. When I had finished talking, he simply said that we might as well go back to the hotel. Taking the box under his arm, he went from the cellar and I followed him up-stairs. We reached the living room just in time to hear a terrific pounding on the door.

I looked at him in amazement and even his eyes were filled with surprise. Who could be at the door? The pounding was incessant, as if the person on the veranda was determined to get in. I realized that the lights being on would lead any one to think the house was occupied. So after Bartley gave me a glance, I went into the big hall and opened the door. There as I flung it open, stood a policeman and Maxson.

The policeman gave me just a look and half yelled, "What are youse doing in this house?" Bartley's voice answered from behind me and in a moment we were all in the living room.

The young man's face was a study, for we must have been the last persons that he expected to see. His eyes kept coming back to us and then suddenly they grew big. His glance had fallen on the box which Bartley still held under

his arm. He said, nothing, however, letting the policeman and Bartley do all the talking.

The officer told us that he had been given orders to keep his eyes on the house as every one was away. As he came round the bend of the road covering his beat, he had noticed that the main floor was lighted. He started to run toward the house and in front of it, he came upon Maxson who was standing before the door, looking at the house. The young man had told him who he was and together they had come to the door.

It struck me rather odd that Maxson should have been in front of the house at that time. More so, when I remembered that the missing gold pieces had just been found and Bartley had suggested that whoever hid them knew the furnace was not in use in the summer. But he told us a rather feasible story and did not seem to be hiding anything.

He had been in town as we knew. The chief, he said, had kept him a long while questioning him, finally letting him go on promise to report the next day. It was late then. He had dinner and then decided to wait for the 9 : 45 train from New York. He had the idea some of the family might return. At the station the only person he knew that came off the train was the secretary. He spoke to her, startling her because she

thought he had been drowned. Then they rode down to the Hill in the little car his uncle had given her. She wished to take him to his hotel but it was late and he had insisted that she leave him when she reached her own. As we knew, the hotel was on the river bank about a mile from the Hill. He had walked down after leaving her, coming round by the house. As he came in sight of it, he saw the lights and wondered what they could mean. Just as he reached the front of the house and stood trying to make up his mind what to do, the policeman had come running up.

It seemed a perfectly logical story and I stole a glance at Bartley to discover how he was taking it. His fine face was expressionless and I could not tell. But I noticed that though the youth stole several glances at the box, Bartley said nothing about our finding it.

The policeman had not seen any person running away from the house, nor had he noticed any one about the house in the times he had passed by on his beat. Maxson insisted that he saw nothing when he came down the road. Whoever the person was that had gotten out of the window, he must have been far away by this time.

There was little else that we could do until morning, and we left after telling the policeman

to call up the town and have another man guard the house during the night. Bartley carried the box under his arm but he said nothing to either the boy or the officer of finding it.

The street lights flashed on just as we reached the road. The night was cool and the wind had increased. Clouds hid the face of the moon and only once in a while could one see a star. We walked slowly, Bartley and I side by side, Maxson stumbling along a few feet behind us. Reaching the car we all climbed in. For a while nothing was said. I was running over the events of the night, trying to find some solution for them all, when Maxson suddenly spoke.

His voice trembled a little and was rather low as he said: "Mr. Bartley, I—I—have been doing a bit of thinking all day. I see that—I—I've been a good deal of a fool, rather a bother. Uncle was far better to me than I deserved. I want to ask you how I can get out of the mess I am in." He paused, then added:— "You don't know that I—I—wrote some letters to Faith before she was married."

"Letters?" came Bartley's quick question.

Under the electric light that we were passing, I saw the boy's head droop and his voice was apologizing and low as he answered, "Yes, sir, some letters, trying to scare her, saying they should not marry. They were not signed."

Bartley had been right when he said the letters had been written by some one in the house. Now the young man confessed that he had written them and from his tone seemed to be very much ashamed. Then I remembered Bartley's statement that people with his nervous, neurotic outlook on life were often cured by a sudden shock. I half grinned at the thought. He had gotten a shock all right.

To my surprise, Bartley did not mention the letters in his conversation with the young man. He talked to him about as a father would to a foolish son, telling him how absurd he had acted and yet not assuming that he had done anything criminal. His advice to the youth was for him to go to his cousin on her return and tell her how foolish he had acted and endeavor in the future to act differently.

We soon reached the hotel and Bartley gave the box to the clerk to keep in the safe. Then we took the elevator to our rooms. The door closed, Bartley dropped into a chair with a sigh.

I tried to get him to talk but he put me off with short answers. For a while he ran through several books that he took from the table but at length dropped them on the floor by the chair. He was tired and, it seemed to me, perplexed. It was not till I was just ready for bed that I discovered the last to be true.

I had asked him if he was reaching a solution of the crime. At my question he looked at me, half in disgust, half in amusement. It was with a weary tone that he replied:—

"For the third time, Pelt, allow me to say, that you know all that has taken place. You know the facts, you have a brain."

He rose from his chair and wearily started to disrobe. Half undressed, he sank back in a chair and lighted a cigarette. His glance went over me and perhaps he saw I had been a trifle hurt at his answer. A little smile came back to his lips, as he said:—

"Excuse me, Pelt, I am tired and feel deeply the death of my old friend."

He paused, then went on, "You ask, have I reached a solution? I am no nearer one than at the beginning. I have looked the evidence all through and I am not satisfied. There is something we do not know. Some fact, maybe slight, yet the keystone of the whole thing. Till I find it, I cannot hope to reach a solution."

He threw his cigarette aside and rose, standing silent a second. Then he said, "The crime looks simple. I have an idea it is very simple. But there is something we do not know, some fact to be discovered."

He smiled again, adding, "Maybe it will come to you in your dreams."

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

An Unexpected Visitor

I HAD a very late breakfast the next morning, in fact being the last one in the dining room. As I waited for my order, I glanced through the morning papers. Blazoned in great headlines across the first page was the story of Maxson's escapade. The stories told of his attempt to have it appear that he had been drowned and how Bartley had discovered him. The young man's story was played up in length and I could see that the papers had grave doubt if he had told the truth. Throwing the papers aside for my breakfast, I smiled as I wondered what the young man would think when he saw how they had featured him.

Breakfast over I went to the room. I had expected to find Bartley there, instead there was a note saying that he was in town and would see me at lunch. For a while I read the rest of the papers and then decided to go down to the bathing beach for a swim.

The beach was fairly crowded when I got there. Little children were playing in the sand, building sand forts or digging great holes. The

raft sixty feet out in the water was crowded with young people, while others were simply sunning themselves on the sand.

I fooled around in the water for perhaps twenty minutes, then came out, throwing myself down on the sand to dry in the sun. For a while I watched a ship that seemed to be simply staying near the Long Island shore miles away. I smiled at my fancy of how, in the days long past, the pirates crept into the sound, smiling again as I thought of our modern "hootch ships" that were doing the same thing. Suddenly I came to attention as my name was called.

Glancing up I saw Hall, one of the detectives that was in the house the night Rice was killed. I had only spoken to him twice and had supposed he had gone back to Providence. But after he dropped on the sand by my side, I discovered that he was working on another case which had kept him at the Hill.

Naturally enough our conversation drifted back to the night of the crime and he retold the story which I already had heard. There was nothing new in his recital. We both expressed our wonder as to who could have committed the murder. In the end, we both agreed that in so much as the murderer simply had to close the door behind him, which would lock because of the spring, he must have come down in the ele-

vator. This caused Hall to say that the murder must have been committed before twelve because the elevator did not run all night. Then we came to the conclusion that the evidence seemed to fix the crime on either Kent or Maxson.

After talking back and forth for a while, Hall rose and left me. I watched his heavy figure go down the beach. He had a strange walk, more of a slouch than anything else, with one shoulder standing high above the other. As I watched him, I wondered how many detectives had the misfortune to have their clients killed while they were presumed to be looking after them.

It was after one when I got back to my room, having had dinner down by the shore. I did not expect to see Bartley when I entered the room, and he was not there. But about ten minutes after I got in, the door opened and he entered.

Something must have pleased him for he was in a rare humor. He smiled at me, stopping by my chair to pat my shoulder before he dropped down on the edge of the bed. Then looking at me, he suddenly laughed.

"Well, Pelt," he said, "you should have been along with me this morning."

"What happened?" I asked, at once interested.

"Well," he drawled out, smiling, "the first thing which happened was that Dunn picked up the chap who wrote the letters to the chief."

"He did," came my reply, "that was quick work."

He nodded, "Yes it was. They had men watching the letter boxes and every letter that was dropped in was taken and examined at once. They found this man without any trouble. Got him, in fact, three minutes after he had dropped another letter in the mail box."

He paused, while I waited for him to continue. Before he did, he rose from the bed and, going to a cigar box, took a cigar and lighted it. Dropping into a chair, he suddenly laughed again.

"Yes, they got him and took him to the station. Before the chief and myself, he not only admitted he wrote the letters but what is more, said very calmly that he had killed Rice."

In astonishment I gave a gasp. It seemed the case was over. Bartley chuckled at my blank expression but went on:— "Yes, he even got angry when I doubted his whole story. And there was one queer thing in it."

"What was that?" came my question.

"Well, it seems that this man, whose name is Johns, is a carpenter. He worked at Rice's house this spring building bookcases into the library. So you see he knew the house, knew how the elevator works and about the library on the top floor. We tried to trip him but he

stuck to his story. It was a simple enough yarn at the best."

He paused to take a fresh cigar, the other having gone out, then continued:— "He claims that he came in just after the men went out of the house, and went to the top floor. He said he saw no one on his way in or out. There he killed Rice. He killed him because God had told him to do it."

"God told him to do it?" I asked in amazement.

Bartley half smiled, "That is what he said. There is no doubt that the man is not right. He is a weak-minded person of the religiously fanatical type. The chief says that he is well known in town. His story has big flaws in it. If he went up right after the men left, then he would have run into Kent. Then again, there was some one in the hall at the time the men went out and for some time after. The two detectives saw Kent go up, they did not see any one else. His story seemed logical at first, but there are holes in it and the man is not mentally right."

"Then you don't think he killed Rice?" I asked.

He shook his head, "No, I don't. He is pretty meager regarding details and how the tables with the gifts were placed. He denied taking anything, and the murderer must have taken

either the book or the money, maybe both. All he knew he could have gotten very easily from the papers and his previous working in the house. In fact the man is not right, and I don't believe he had any more to do with the death of Rice than I had."

At that moment the telephone rang and going over to the desk, Bartley picked up the receiver, I heard his "Hello chief," then came a silence which was broken by his laughing and saying, "It's what I expected." They talked a few moments longer, then he placed the receiver back on the hook and turned toward me.

"Well, Pelt," he grinned, "the chief says that Johns' wife and sister insists that he did not leave the house on the night of the murder. In fact, they went to bed at just twelve. That finishes his story of committing the crime."

"But why under heaven," I asked, "should any one confess to a crime he did not commit?"

"Oh, that happens often. Seeking notoriety, perhaps. Often 'tis that inferiority complex I spoke of. The desire to be in the limelight. This man also is a religious fanatic. He spoke of how the newspapers passed by those who served the Lord. Then again he is not right mentally, there is no doubt of that. I had an idea, when the chief showed us the letter, that it

came from a type of that sort. There is no doubt he did not commit the murder, though they will have to hold him a while, I think, anyway—"

Before he could finish, there came a knock on the door. I rose to open it but Bartley called out "Come in!" The door opened and who should came walking into the room but James Kent.

I gazed at him in astonishment. I had the idea he was still held in the jail at Westerly. Evidently his lawyers had managed to get him out on bail. I could see that Bartley was also surprised, though he managed to hide it well.

Kent said nothing till he had closed the door, then turned and faced us. Again I was struck by his great strength, and, though his face was not a pleasant one, yet it had power. The last time I saw him he had been very angry, but he was calm enough now. In fact, when he started to speak I got the impression he was trying to act as natural as he could. His face did flush for a second as we looked at him but the flush died away at once.

"Mr. Bartley," he said in a rather low voice, "no doubt you are a bit surprised to see me. I just got of that jail a few moments ago," and an angry flash came into his eyes at the recollection.

Bartley said nothing, waiting for the man to go on. I saw Kent clench his fists as he continued:—

"My lawyers fixed up the bail, and I came down here fast as I could to see you. I want you to get me out of this fix."

Bartley's eyes wore a curious expression as they met those of Kent. I could tell he was puzzled by this new turn and hardly knew what to say. But he kept silent, waiting to hear more fully what the man wished.

"You see," Kent went on, "I seem to be in a bad mess. I know no more about how Rice was killed than you do." He paused, then burst out in rage, "I will make some one pay for this."

Though he had been calm enough when he entered the room, there was no doubt he was getting angry. His face flushed red and his black eyes snapped warmly. The more I looked at him, the more I wondered just why he had come to see Bartley. There was no doubt that the man was suspected of the crime and I would have thought Bartley should have been the last person he would wish to see. Again I wondered how he had gotten out of jail so easily.

Bartley eyed him carefully, then said soberly:— "I take it you are not making a friendly call, just to be sociable, say. What is it you expect me to do?"

The broker dropped into a chair and gazed at the floor before replying. Then picking each word as if he wished to be careful of what he said, he raised his eyes and spoke:—

"Mr. Bartley," he said, "I am wise enough to know I am in a bad position. I expect to get out of it but there will be talk." He paused, then said suddenly, "I will give you ten thousand dollars to drop everything and simply look after my interests."

Bartley's face flushed red and an angry look came into his eyes. I wondered if Kent was trying to bribe him. It looked so from the offer he had made. Then I wondered just why he should, for so far as I knew Bartley was leaving Kent to the local detective and the chief. Bartley's tone was rather cool when he replied:—

"Kent, that is a rather queer offer for you to make. I don't intend to drop anything till I discover who killed my friend Rice."

The tone had been crisp and short and I saw Kent move a bit nervously under it. But he looked at Bartley and spoke:—

"I don't mean it that way, Mr. Bartley. I mean simply this. You see it's just as much to my interest now to discover who killed Rice as any one's. Those darned police officials have the idea I did. I admit my story about the cane looks bad. But my memory is darned poor, and

I did think the cane was home. The thing will be solved some day but I want to be cleared as soon as I can be. I don't like the attitude the papers have taken. I want the case ended, the murderer caught. That is what I meant by asking you to do what you could for me."

While he was talking, I studied him. He seemed earnest enough and I wondered if he was not speaking the truth. It was to his interest, above any one else's, to have the crime cleared up. Till we were able to prove who killed Rice, Kent would be under suspicion. Yet there he sat, playing the part of an injured man. If he was guilty, then I could understand why he was called the nerviest man on the street.

Bartley did not have very much to say in response, though he told him he would naturally be pleased if the crime was soon solved. This was not much of an answer, but it seemed to suit Kent, who left us a few moments later.

As the door closed I turned and looked at Bartley. It had been an unexpected visit and I was curious to know what he might think. His eyes met mine but the look in them was peculiar. After a moment he rose to his feet and walked several times up and down the room. I saw him once slowly shake his head and I knew he was trying to solve some problem that had come into his mind. At length he turned to me.

"Pelt, either Kent is a much injured man or else he is a nervier man than I thought. I am not sure whether he is trying to bribe me, thinking I would drop the case, or if he indeed told the truth. There are several things make me think that perhaps he is guilty. Then again there are several things that make me sure he is not."

He paused, gave a little laugh and went on, "One thing is sure, Kent must have pulled some powerful wires to have gotten out of jail. It's true there has been no charge of murder placed against him but Dunn wished one. The fact he is out, shows some one with power has been approached."

He went to the window, glanced out for a moment, then pulled his watch from his pocket and glanced at it. Seeing the time he gave a sudden start, saying, "Come on, Pelt, we have to go and see Mr. Rice's daughter. She and her husband got back this morning."

All of the time he was driving to the house, I was wondering what new facts could be secured. I doubted if the girl and her husband knew anything but there must be some reason for our going to see them. It was not till we had stopped before the door that Bartley spoke. Then it was to say that he still was of the opinion we had overlooked some little fact which must be

discovered before we could hope to solve the crime.

The butler let us in and Bartley told him to ask the young couple to come to the library. He bowed and hurried away while we went to the elevator and in a moment were before the library door. It was open and I saw that the wedding presents had been removed from the room. The hole in the door that had been made in order to enter the room, was still there—a ragged gash in the mahogany.

We stood a moment by the door and I saw Bartley reach down and press the little spring in the lock. Suddenly he gave an exclamation and bent down to the latch. He looked at it a second, fingering the spring. On his face was a curious expression. Then he straightened and tried the knob, turning to me.

"This is queer," he said. "That spring latch seems to be broken."

I gave a start, wondering how long it had been in that condition. I, myself, had pointed out the morning of the crime that it had not been necessary to lock the door. All the murderer needed to have done, was to shut the door and the spring latch would lock. That had explained how the person committing the crime had been able to leave the key inside the room. But I started when I remembered that, so far as

I knew, none of us had tried the spring at all. Seeing it, I had simply taken for granted that it would lock the door.

I said as much to Bartley, who listened with a rather glum look on his face. When I finished he replied:— "That is true, Pelt. We built up our theories around the fact that the murderer simply closed the door and the spring lock locked it. That explained the key being inside. It gave the only logical escape from the room for I do not think the murderer got out by the window and walked the ledge. That's not reasonable. But the spring is broken. If it was that way the morning of the murder, then we are up against it. It will mean coming back to the theory that the murderer got out some other way than through the door. He could not have shut the door, locked it and left the key inside."

At this point the elevator opened and the butler came toward us. He said the young people would be up in a moment. Bartley paid no attention to this, asking at once:—

"Williams, the spring latch in this door is broken. Do you know anything about it?"

The old man gave a look at the door, as if thinking the question was of little importance. But his answer startled us both, for he said:—

"Why yes, Mr. Bartley, Mr. Rice told me two weeks ago the spring was broken and we had a

man who was to fix it only he never came. I will have to attend to it."

Bartley's eyes had grown large while the butler was speaking. His crisp voice snapped out:— "You mean to tell me that lock has been out of order for two weeks?"

As if astonished that he could be interested in so slight a matter, the butler replied:—

"Yes, sir, it has been out of order for two weeks. You had better use the key to lock the door."

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

ONE CHANCE IN A MILLION

THE butler's reply had been so startling that neither of us said a word. Instead there came a silence in which I stared at the lock as if I expected it might suddenly speak. The whole case seemed to have come up against a stone wall. If the spring latch had been out of order for two weeks before the murder, then the door had been locked with the key. That being so, the murderer could not have come out by the door. The key had been inside and the room must have been left in some other way. The windows seemed the only solution. Suddenly it dawned upon me that the butler's remark about the latch seemed to clear both Kent and Maxson. They both had left the room and had come down to the main floor by the elevator. They could not have done that, if the door had been locked with the key inside. And the key had been inside there was no doubt of that.

Suddenly Bartley gave a long low whistle. I looked at him in time to see a sudden expression of wonder pass over his face. He glanced at the

door—and smiled. I would have given a good deal to know what caused the whistle and the smile. But whatever it was, I did not know nor did I find out then, for the young woman and her husband were coming from the elevator.

As she came to the open door, I saw her give a shudder as there swept over her the recollection of the morning when her father was found dead. She was not in mourning, though her dress was of sober color. Both she and her husband greeted us warmly, notwithstanding there was little doubt they wondered why Bartley had insisted on seeing them in the library.

He led us all into the little room where the body had been found. At his request, the butler brought some chairs and we seated ourselves. Bartley went over and stood beside the desk while we all glanced eagerly at him. His look rather puzzled me. I could see that something had caused a little trace of excitement to appear in his eyes. That in itself was enough to make me wonder for Bartley as a rule never lost his poise.

He glanced us all over, his eyes resting with a smile upon the girl who sat with one hand in that of her husband. When he spoke, his words were addressed to her.

"Mrs. Camp," he said, "I wanted to ask you some questions in this room. I brought you up

here because I thought the sight of the place where your father was found, might bring back some fact to you that you have overlooked."

"But, Mr. Bartley," came her low voice, "I told you all I knew."

He smiled at her, "I know that, Faith. But it's my idea that there is something we have overlooked, some little fact that we must have before we can reach any solution. That's why I brought you here, to ask you once more to go through the story of the finding of your father's body."

The girl looked very sober as she caught the import of his words and I saw her brow knit as she tried to recall all that had taken place. The story was the same as we had heard. For some reason she had been alarmed when the butler could not find her father and had insisted that the door be broken in. Some one had said they might get a locksmith but she insisted that the detectives break through the woodwork. An ax was found and Hall chopped a hole in the door. Then they went to the little room and found her father. Her voice broke when she came to this part of the story and her husband put his arm around her.

"Faith," Bartley broke in, "you told me you never touched anything on the floor. Are you sure?"

Her eyes went around the room for a moment and she simply nodded, then said, "No, I did not."

Bartley took a piece of paper from his pocket, also a pencil and drew a chair up by the desk. Then he turned to the girl.

"Faith, I am going to try a little test. It's one of the psychological tests used across the sea. As I call off different things, I want you to give me the first word that flashes into your mind. Don't try and pick a word, just give the first one that comes, no matter how foolish it is."

I could see the girl did not understand why he should request this. I, myself, understood. I knew that in criminal circles abroad and even once in a while in this country, the word association test was used. It was a psychological test to get the reaction of a person to certain things. In a long list of words, certain words were put in and from the length of time that the person took to reply, it was decided whether he were hiding anything. I doubted, however, if Bartley thought the girl was keeping anything back. Instead, I was sure he thought she had forgotten something.

He started to read off his list of words, writing down the word she gave in reply. I noticed at once, he was only naming certain objects in the

room—objects which had been there the morning of the discovery of the crime. Her replies came quick enough, yet seemed to be of little value. The first object mentioned was 'floor' and her answer was 'father.' One could see that there flashed into her mind the picture of her father dead on the floor of the room. When he came to 'window' she replied 'open,' showing that she had remembered the open window.

In like manner he went down a long list of words, mentioning the various objects that had been in the room. Evidently he had gained nothing for he started to fold the paper and place it in his pocket, when his eyes fell on some object. As if he had forgotten it, he wrote a word on his list and said 'camera.' Like a flash, she replied 'floor.'

At her reply, Bartley looked at her curiously. "Why," he asked, "did you say floor when I mentioned the word 'camera'?"

"Why, because it was the first one that came into my mind. I . . . ."

Suddenly I saw her eyes grow big as she turned and looked first at Bartley, then at the camera standing near her. It was a large camera, standing on a tripod and used, we knew, to take pictures of various books. It had been covered by the draperies the morning we came into the room, the draperies that had been pulled

down in the struggle and had fallen over the camera.

"What do you remember?" came Bartley's voice.

"Why," she said, "it's foolish, but I did touch something that morning."

"You did!" came the excited voice of Bartley. "What was it?"

The girl half flushed as if she thought the whole thing was not worth bothering about, but answered, "Why, I remember now that I picked up the cap that was over the lense of the camera. It was lying on the floor. I remember I half kicked it and that instinctively I picked it up and replaced it."

Bartley's eyes were flashing, as he asked, "Was the drapery over the lens?"

"Yes, it had fallen all over the camera and I had to thrust under the drapery to place the cap over the lens."

Bartley suddenly, with an energetic air, placed the paper in his pocket and then told the girl that his questions were over. Before she left, she turned and asked why it was the word that caused her to remember she had picked the cap from the floor.

Bartley told her that it was simply the subconscious mind breaking through some sort of a repression. The word had stirred her memory

and without thinking, she had answered 'floor' which simply brought back the whole thing. A moment after this, they left us.

Bartley spent some time with the camera, looking it all over and even looking inside of it. I watched him for a moment or so, then went into the library and spent the time looking at the manuscripts which were under the glass cases. I was roused by Bartley's voice.

"Pelt," he asked, "do you remember what Chaucer said?"

"Chaucer?" came my puzzled reply.

He smiled, "Yes, you may remember he said:—

> 'Tho it abide a yere or two or three,
> Mordre will out, this is my conclusion.' "

He smiled as I looked a bit puzzled at his quotation. Then as we went toward the open door, he placed his hand on my shoulder.

"It's all over now, Pelt, all but being able to prove what I know."

His tone was so earnest I looked at him, "Prove what?" I asked.

"Who killed my friend," came the reply.

Wondering if I heard aright, I gasped, "You know who killed Rice?"

He simply nodded, the fine face stern, the lips tight. In a second, seeing my wondering look, he half smiled as he answered, "Yes, I know now.

But the legal proofs will be the hardest of all."

By the elevator door he paused, as if thinking of something. Then he turned to me. "Pelt, you better stay here for at least forty minutes, so if I want you, I can get you at once."

Flinging the elevator door open, he stepped within but did not close the door after him. Instead there came a thoughtful look over his face as he once more repeated the line of Chaucer in a musing tone. Then he spoke:—

"Chaucer was right, 'Murder will out.' I am going to town on one of the remotest chances I have ever taken—one in a million. Yet somehow I feel that it may come through. There is some Nemesis that pursues and overtakes one that kills. Blind chance steps forth, interposes facts and motives. So with my trip to town, it's the one little flip that fate may have taken. If so, I have my man." He paused for a moment, adding as he closed the door to descend, "Have him cold."

Startled by his words, I stood gazing rather blankly at the wall for a few moments. Try as I could, I failed to understand what he had discovered that made him think he knew the murderer. When he came into the room, he had no idea who the guilty person might be. He had said that. But his very tone and air convinced me he was sure now. Besides, Bartley never

made positive statements of that kind unless he was sure. I knew that from past experience.

I tried to puzzle out what it was that had given him his positive tone. True, I realized that the discovery that the door would not lock by the spring catch, had changed the theory we had been working on. The murderer could not have left the room and simply closed the door and, by that, locked it. The key had been found inside and the door had to be locked with the key, locked from inside the room. That left the windows as the only means of escape. True, that meant walking the narrow ledge and sliding down a copper pipe to the ground. Somehow it seemed almost impossible. Yet it was the only way out of the room that had been left. But somehow, I had the idea that the thing Bartley had discovered was of more importance than the fact the spring lock did not work. What it was, I could not tell.

Giving it up as a bad job, I went into the library. For a while I bent over the cases which contained the parchments. I knew little about them, besides the knowledge that they were the work of the monks of the twelfth century and onward. The gay-colored letters, still bright after the centuries, had caused me to think of the tired fingers that long ago had so carefully traced the letters. The work had been the life

task of many and the thought came, that those fingers which had toiled so carefully, hundreds of years ago, were now dust.

Tired of the manuscripts, I began to look at the books in the cases. The cases filled all sides of the room, cases with glass doors behind which rested thousands of dollars worth of books. In idle curiosity I went from case to case, giving a quick glance at the contents of the row of shelves but not touching any of the books. I would have been unable to look at most of them anyway for the majority of the cases were locked.

It was not till I had reached the case by the broken door that I found one unlocked. My eye caught the title of a book that I knew. It had been written by a college friend of mine. It seemed out of place in the room for the collection was not modern at all, being first editions of other days. Opening the glass door, I pulled the book forth.

I spent a few moments looking at it, reading snatches here and there, smiling once in a while as I saw in certain lines characteristic words of my friend. Then, through with it, I started to put it back. As I did so, I noticed that the line of books on the shelf was a little uneven. I started to straighten them when, in reaching back, my hand fell on a book standing behind the others against the wall of the case.

Hardly thinking what I did, and presuming the book perhaps had fallen out of place, I pulled it forth. I started to place it back in the row of books when my eyes suddenly fell on the title. It was a thin book of about twice the usual breadth and the letters on the cover were faded with age, so faded I could barely make them out. But as I glanced at them, I suddenly caught my breath and stood silent. There, across the cover of the thin volume ran the words "I sonnetti lussuriosi di Pietro Aretino." I held in my hand the missing book, worth $30,000.

For a while I could only stare at it, not even turning the pages. When I opened it, my eyes fell on the faded Italian letters that were at the bottom of each engraving. The less said about the engravings the better, for even though I was alone, my face flushed as I looked at them. The thought came to me that it seemed a very small book to be worth so much money. There were only between fifty and sixty pages and, as I remember, sixteen or seventeen engravings. They were drawn in a day when times were more free than ours, yet the subjects even then caused trouble. I knew, of course, the value of the book did not depend upon its size but on the fact it was the only one in the world.

Puzzled at my discovery of the book, I pulled the others off the shelf to see if there was any-

thing else I could find. But I saw nothing. It looked as if the book had been simply shoved behind the others to get it out of sight. But who had done it? There came flashing over me the fear that either Bartley or the chief might think of the secretary. Still, I could not believe that she was the one. Who could have placed it there? It seemed as if it was as good a hiding place as any, for the book might have rested there for some time—till the one who had hidden it wished to take it from the house.

At this moment the telephone, which was on the desk by the window, rang. Going over, I picked up the receiver. Bartley's voice came floating over the wire telling me to meet him at the hotel. When he finished, I told him of finding the book. I heard him give a chuckle but his only comment was that I bring it with me.

It turned out to be several hours before I saw Bartley again. I returned at once to the hotel and went to our room. There in a chair by the open window, I tried to figure out why the book had been hidden in the case. The more I thought of it, the more I became perplexed. It was an odd place to hide it but at that, no one would have thought of looking there. It struck me the person who had placed the book there, had intended to return and get it when all

danger was over. Naturally, I tried to figure out who that person could be. An uneasy feeling crept over me when I thought that the secretary knew more about the book than anyone else and could have hidden it. But I tried to dismiss the thought from my mind.

It was with a feeling of relief that I heard the knob of the door turn, and Bartley entered. Under his arm was a package and he seemed to be in a rare humor. In fact he was trying to whistle and, if one knew Bartley, that thing in itself was enough to tell that he was highly elated over something. For if there was one thing that he did not bother with, it was music, and only twice before had I ever heard him whistling a tune of any kind.

He grinned broadly at my surprised look, placing the package carefully on the table. Then he took his old pipe, the one he never smoked till he was at the end of a case. Packing his favorite English tobacco into the bowl, he lighted it. It looked as if, at least to his satisfaction, his one chance in a million had come through.

If it had, he did not tell me. Instead he asked about the finding of the book, smiling once or twice at several remarks that I made. Then when I had finished the story, I handed the Aretino to him. He glanced through it, gave a

shrug of his shoulders at several of the plates, then remarked dryly:—

"This book is worth its weight in gold but I would not give it house room. I am liberal enough in all my views but that's no reason for a book of this kind having a public circulation. True it was another age that wrote it and other morals that could stand these plates. I judge, however—"

He paused, gave a slight start and took from the book a little slip of paper. He half smiled when he handed it to me. I took it eagerly enough, though it turned out to be nothing more than the slip that is placed in all packages of tobacco. It had the name of the brand on, one of the cheapest and worst of all brands. I felt a bit mortified that I had not observed it when I had glanced at the book. But Bartley said it had been tucked away between several of the plates.

I knew of course that it was a clue of a kind. Rice would never have smoked that kind of tobacco and I remembered that Bartley had said that he never smoked a pipe anyway. If the person who had taken the book had placed the slip of paper there, then my fears regarding the secretary had been vain. This thought somehow or other gave me much satisfaction.

When I handed the slip back to Bartley, he

simply placed it between the leaves of his note-book. He made no comments about it and I knew better than to ask any questions. Instead of speaking, he leaned back in the chair, the smoke from the pipe curling toward the ceiling and drifting finally out of the open window. He seemed contented, satisfied. I would have given a good deal if he had spoken.

He did in the end, after his smoke was finished. But it was only to say, and there was a smile on his face as he spoke:— "Pelt, we had better go down and see if the dining room is open. After dinner we go to town and then—" He threw out his hands in an expressive gesture, rising from the chair. I waited, but he said nothing else. Impatient, I asked:—

"Then—what?"

He smiled and drawled out, "Pelt, they tell me that patience is a rare and great virtue. I commend the thought to you. I simply meant by 'then' that we will prove Chaucer was right."

"Chaucer," came my disgusted voice.

"You remember," he grinned at me, "his expression, 'Murder will out.'"

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

THE SHADOW ON THE GLASS

THE clock in the town hall had just struck nine as Bartley and I were climbing the stone steps of the court house. Dusk had fallen and across the street, the park looked fresh and green in the twilight. Couples were strolling to and fro. All this I took in, as we left the car and went into the building.

I thought we would go to the chief's office. Instead we went up to the other floor, pausing before the glass door that was marked "District Attorney." Bartley gave a knock, then pushed the door open, and we entered the room.

I had wondered just what our trip to town might mean, though I was sure in my own mind that Bartley had reached the solution of the case. His manner told me that. A grave, sober air was upon him and he had very little to say. When we stepped into the room, I was sure that he was to tell us his solution of the case. But I wondered what it might be, for it was still a mystery to me.

The District Attorney came over to his side and for a few moments they held a low whispered

conversation. I glanced around the room. The chief was sitting near the window, smoking a cigar. His uniform looked as if it had lately been pressed, and the gaze he turned on Bartley was a curious one. Dunn was standing near the chief and seemed a bit cast down over something, but what it was, I did not, of course, know. The thing that surprised me the most, was to see Kent seated in a chair by the great desk that stood in the center of the room. Kent was the last person I would have expected Bartley might wish present. Yet he was there, though the others seemed to leave him alone.

There was a curious air of constraint over them all. Neither the chief nor Dunn looked at Kent and all seemed nervous. Perhaps it was because they were all curious and just a bit excited. I could tell at a glance that no one had any idea why Bartley had called them together, nor, for that matter, did I know myself. Taking a chair by the window, I passed a word or so with the two police officers and waited.

Bartley and the attorney talked together for several minutes, the lawyer then taking a chair near his desk. Bartley went to the table that was in the center of the room, upon which he placed his brief case. Then, for a second, he stood looking at us. No longer did he look tired, instead in his eyes was a glitter of satisfaction.

His face was stern and he said nothing for a moment. I noticed that Kent seemed to get uneasy as he waited for Bartley to speak.

He opened his brief case and took from it a small package which he laid carefully on the table, as if he was afraid that it might break. Then rather slowly and above all soberly, he started to speak.

"I have called you together to-night because I wished to give you my opinion of the murder. It seemed to me that Mr. Kent should be included because of the circumstances of the past few days. Up to this afternoon, I had little idea myself who killed Mr. Rice. By a chance discovery and the nearest thing to a miracle I know of, I suddenly discovered that all our theories had been wrong."

I saw the chief give Dunn a questioning look and the local detective shook his head in reply. Evidently no one knew just what Bartley was to say. All of us were waiting eagerly for his next words.

"Let me go over the case and refresh your memories. We know that on the night of the murder, Mr. Rice brought back to the house some friends of his from the club, Mr. Kent included. Kent's coming to the house was the merest sort of an accident. He was invited simply that he might see that the copy of the

book, the Aretino, which Rice owned, was the first edition. When this was shown him, he doubted if it was the first edition and said so. Mr. Kent then left the house with the rest of the men, excusing himself after they had gone a ways and returned, going to the library. When he first went in, he had a cane with him; when he came out the second time, he had none. Mr. Rice was found dead the next morning, killed by Kent's cane. When we asked him about the cane, he said it was at his house. Dunn and myself found out he had a bit of a quarrel with Rice, and the theory was that he killed him."

Kent's face had gone red under Bartley's words, yet his eyes never left the face of the speaker. I saw Bartley smile at him as he finished the summary of the evidence against the broker, asking him if that was not so. Kent rather coolly replied that Bartley had told the truth regarding his movements on the night of the crime, but insisted that he had thought the cane was at his house. He added he had been thunderstruck when they told him Rice had been murdered with the cane.

When he finished, Bartley nodded his head in agreement, replying, with a grin at Dunn, "Dunn built up the case against Kent. I don't blame him and I hope Mr. Kent will have no hard feelings against him. The facts were strong

enough to convince most juries I have ever seen. Kent, himself, made it worse when he tried to get down to New York. That caused his arrest. True he was simply going to see his lawyer, for he had just discovered that his cane was in the house of Mr. Rice, not in his own home as he had said. I admit it looked as if he might be the guilty man. The evidence was strong enough to hold him and I would have done the same thing myself. Only it so happens, Kent did not kill Rice; he had nothing to do with it. He told the truth, though he might have been a little more diplomatic in the way he told it. But he had nothing to do with the murder."

"The Deuce you say," came the startled voice of Dunn, while the chief simply gave his detective a very satisfied look. The chief had never believed that the wealthy broker committed the crime and simply looked at Dunn with a grin.

"No," came Bartley's answer, "he had nothing to do with it. Understand me, at the first, it looked as if no one else could have done it. Then came our discovery of the missing money and the wild attempt of Maxson to make it appear that he had been drowned. The fact he had quarreled with both his cousin and his uncle, and that he had told them that on the day of the wedding he would give them a 'jolt,'

looked pretty bad. When we found him with one of the gold pieces taken from the missing box, the evidence seemed overwhelming. The chief was sure then he was guilty. Dunn, however, was sure that Kent was the guilty man, while to top it all off, we had a man confess that he committed the murder. We soon found this last was untrue, yet we were left with two conflicting theories, either one of which might be right—except for one thing."

"What was that?" came the interested question from the District Attorney.

"A very simple thing, yet one that bothered me. If Mr. Kent had killed Rice, he did it for the book. That Aretino is, I presume, worth the $30,000 they value it at. It's the only copy of the original edition in the world. Book lovers, or rather collectors, were interested in it and its discovery made a stir. The facts against Kent, added to the discovery that the book was missing, of course made it seem as if he was guilty. But the money was missing also and the missing box of gold pieces made it look as if the young man was guilty. Right here came the conflict. Either one might have killed for one thing—Kent for the book—Maxson for the money. But neither would take both, that was impossible. Kent would never take the

money, and the chances were very much against the young man having taken the book. Only one theory was left."

"And that?" I ventured, as he paused.

He smiled. "It was, Pelt, that the money might have been taken by the young man before the murder, or the book taken by the secretary after the crime. I decided, however, there was nothing in that theory. Both things were taken by the person that killed Rice."

I saw the chief shake his head, as if he did not quite understand, and he asked, "Do you mean, all that fool yarn that kid told was true?"

"Not a bit of doubt of it. It was all true. The inferiority complex I told you about this afternoon will explain the motive for all he did. I know his attempt to run away was foolish, almost inexplainable to a normal person. But the boy is not normal. He did the very things he told us of and though they seem very foolish to us, yet to him they were very real. He is a mental type and wished to be talked about. He did take one of the fifty-dollar gold pieces, but he had nothing to do with the crime. He told you the truth. That let him out. Kent, if his story was true, is innocent also. Some one else must have done it."

"But, Good Lord, Mr. Bartley," came the chief's startled tone, "who in the Devil was there

left? What other motive was there? If neither one of these two persons that all the evidence pointed at, is guilty, then who can be? The evidence seemed clear that one of the two did it."

I saw Kent give Bartley a little smile. It must have been rather embarrassing for him to have heard the story Bartley told, also to have discovered how sure Dunn had been that he was guilty. But he was acting like a good sport, showing no malice and even grinning at Dunn when their eyes met.

"Well, chief," came Bartley's reply, "the only trouble with the evidence, was that it was too good—too conclusive. I better explain a little more." He paused for a moment, as if listening to something. But the only sound was the shrill cry of a boy floating up from the street. "When the case was looked into, the evidence seemed very simple. There were no clues, except those that connected the men we had named. Yet both, in fact all of us on the case, overlooked something. And that was the hour that Rice was killed."

"But Mr. Bartley," replied the chief, "there was no way of fixing that."

Bartley smiled, "So it seemed, yet there was. He overlooked one fact. You remember there was a very heavy thunder storm the night of the

murder. In fact, there were some flashes of lightning that seemed incessant. You forget, that for ten minutes, all the lights at the Hill were out, between 11:45 and 11:55. Mr. Rice was killed during those ten minutes. I think, maybe, in the first three of the ten, but I can prove he was killed during that time."

The chief shook his head, as if saying he gave it up, and the look of wonder on his face was rather laughable. Even I, who knew that Bartley never made a statement of that kind unless he could prove it, wondered why he was so positive. Our amazement seemed to amuse him and he started to untie the package on the desk. Then raising his head, he said:—

"You see, I am positive of that. If I am right, then neither Kent nor Maxson had anything to do with the death, for both left the room long before that hour. In fact, as I said the first day, this murder was not premeditated. I mean, no one was hiding for Rice in order to kill him. It was done in a struggle, a wild effort to escape disgrace."

"Disgrace?" some one echoed.

"Disgrace in the sense that the individual had been found trying to steal something in the rooms, and, in the struggle that took place, killed Rice in sudden anger. There is no doubt of that. I think Rice was perhaps in the larger room.

Let us say he might have been looking out of one of the windows and the bookcases and the draperies hid him from the sight of the person entering the room. Maybe, he was watching the play of the lightning on the sea. The person enters, enters with no intention of stealing. He peers in the little room and sees the Aretino, maybe on the safe or the desk. He remembers it is worth $30,000. The person had no idea it could not be sold, that selling meant discovery. He saw only the chance to take the book and get away. Shall we say he took it and Rice, coming into the little room at that moment, saw him. Then a struggle started. Rice proved stronger than the person thought. The fight swept all over the room, in the dark, remember, the lights having gone out. Then the murderer's hand fell on the cane and, in sudden rage, he pounded the life out of the shipowner."

"My lord," I heard Kent mutter, "you would think he was there and saw it all."

"But," came in the squeaky voice of Dunn, "I don't see who there was that could have done it."

Bartley smiled again, his voice being rather dry as he replied, "Why, Dunn, I am even going to show you the man's picture—taken while he was struggling with Rice."

The District Attorney shot a startled look at

Bartley, as if asking whether he had suddenly gone crazy. I heard the chief say "It can't be done." Just what Bartley might have answered, I could not say, for suddenly I heard a long low whistle float up from the street.

Bartley started over to the wall. His voice was crisp as he snapped out. "I want the lights out for a moment. There will come in here in a second or so, a man. That man will be the murderer. I don't want you to show any surprise when I turn on the lights after he enters. I have him, I can convict him. It's some one you never thought of. I want you simply to watch the glass in the door. I will tell you why later."

He pressed the button, and the room became dark. Not a dense darkness, for the light from the street lights floated in. Yet it was dark enough to make it impossible to distinguish the features of the people in the room. In a dazed wonder, I kept my eyes on the glass door. The light was on in the hall and the glass showed the yellow reflection. I think all were wondering why Bartley had put out the light.

The room was still. Through the windows came the sounds of the street and some one uneasily moved his chair. I even heard the heavy breathing of the chief, as we waited. Then after what seemed an endless wait, I heard the sound of footsteps in the hall. Footsteps of

some one not exactly sure of just the room he wanted who was studying the names on the doors. And then suddenly, there fell a shadow on the glass.

The light must have been back of the person, for like a silhouette there fell upon the glass of the door the black shadow of a man. Who it was I could not tell, for the face was toward us and seemed but a black mass. Then he turned, as if looking up the hall and I saw the head and shoulders. A shadow of a big man, with one shoulder that stood higher than the other.

In a second, I heard his hand fumble with the knob of the door and it was flung open. He stood with the light from the hall flooding into the room, stood waiting, as if trying to find out if any one was in. A tall figure, heavy and thick-set, with that one shoulder higher than the other one. And it needed but a glance to see who the man was. For as he turned his head, to again look down the hall, the light fell full upon his face. It was one of the men that had been hired to guard the wedding presents the night of the crime. Bartley had said the murderer would enter the room. And as the man made one step within, I saw that it was the detective—Hall.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

MURDER WILL OUT

ALL of us, save perhaps the District Attorney, recognized Hall. The thought was in all of our minds that Bartley had said the murderer would come in the door. It seemed incredible he should have known that Hall would come in. So far as I knew, there was not a single bit of evidence which connected him with the crime. Yet, Bartley had been certain the murderer would be the man that would come in through the door. And the man that had opened the door was Hall.

Before he could come further into the room, Bartley had turned on the light. After the darkness, the sudden brightness made us blink. I saw Hall give us a curious glance, as his eyes swept over the room.

"What's the big idea of sitting in the dark?" he asked in a gruff tone.

No one answered for a moment. The chief's eyes, filled with amazement and doubt, came to the detective's face and then went back to Bartley. Dunn, I noticed, gave but one look at Hall and a sudden startled expression swept over his

face. Bartley's face gave no idea of what he was thinking about, for it was stern and cold and expressionless. As he turned to Hall, he answered the question the man had asked.

"Glad you came up Hall," he said, and the voice was crisp. "We were talking the murder over and wanted to ask you a question or so."

I may have been mistaken, but I thought the man gave a little start. He seemed to become tense, as if expecting something. Then he replied:— "But I told you all I knew."

"Yes," came the reply from Bartley, "but I wanted to ask you a question or so, in order to have the facts straight. You say that after Kent came down from the library, no one went up again?"

"Not that I saw," came the short reply.

"And you and Wells went up after you had your lunch, and found the door locked?"

"Sure!"

Bartley was silent for a moment, playing with the package on the table. Then he asked, "You are sure the door was locked?"

"Dead sure, we could not open it."

"And the next morning after you broke the door in, did you turn the key that was inside the door?"

Hall was silent a moment. I could see he was getting a bit angry at the questioning. He

seemed to study his words before he said, "I told you once, that I had to reach through that hole I made in the door, and unlock it, as the door was locked from the inside."

To my surprise, Bartley did not ask another question for the time being. Instead he undid the package, throwing the string on the desk, and unwrapping the paper. When the package was undone, we saw that it contained two photographs, mounted on cardboard. We all watched him eagerly, wondering what they might be. For a moment or so, he stood holding them in his hand, his face set, his lips tight. Then in a low voice he spoke:—

"I suppose we men do not often stop to think, if there is a God or not. We moderns have little to say on that point. But from the first, I had one idea back in my mind. It was this. If there is a force of righteousness in the world, it could not allow a man like Rice to be brutally killed and the murderer escape. There were no clues in this case, nothing to point the way. Yet out of the clear sky, there stepped forth some power, to lay the crime at the feet of the guilty person. The proof is something we never ran into before in a murder. It was the one chance in a million. Yet it is the most conclusive proof that one could ask."

As he paused, I saw the chief leaning forward

in his chair, his mouth open, his eyes big. Dunn's look never left Bartley's face. None of us knew what he was talking about, and the seriousness of his tone was almost religious. Eagerly we waited for the next words.

"You remember," he said, "the lights were out the night of the murder. The struggle swept all over the little room—in the dark, remember. In a corner by the door, stood the great camera, that was used to take pictures of certain of his books. In that struggle the cap was knocked off the lens, and in some manner, the bulb fell under one of the legs of the tripod." He paused to add, "In that camera at the time was an undeveloped plate."

There came a sudden comprehending "Ah!" from the District Attorney, but no one else spoke. All were trying to puzzle out just what he meant. He continued:—

"That cap must have been knocked off in the early part of the struggle. With the bulb on the floor, under the tripod, the camera was all set for a picture."

"But," came my question, "the room was dark, John."

He nodded. "Yes, it was dark, a dense darkness. But remember one thing. There came those violent and incessant flashes of lightning. At some time, the two men were in front of that

camera and also in front of the window when a flash of lightning came. It was long enough to have on that plate the faint silhouette of the two men. Not a real picture, remember, only the outline, but enough to show upon the plate. Later in the struggle, the heavy draperies over the doors were pulled down and fell over the camera, thick draperies that shut out all light. It was there in the morning and was so heavy that no light had come through to spoil the plate. Mr. Rice's daughter, when she came into the room that morning, by sheer instinct, picked up the cap from the floor and replaced it over the lens. I remembered that the bulb had fallen under the leg of the tripod. I knew if there had been an undeveloped plate in the camera, there might be something on it."

He paused, then said soberly:— "And on this plate was the shadow of the murderer, and here are the pictures made from it."

Suddenly he turned to Hall. His voice had a crisp thin edge that stung. "Hall, there is one more question I want you to answer."

Hall's face had turned white, and I could see the sweat form on his brow. His eyes were nervously searching the room, and I saw his hands tremble. He looked frightened and desperate.

"One question," came that cold voice of Bart-

ley. "You say you found that key inside the door. Did you know that the spring lock was broken, that it was impossible to lock that door except from the outside? Tell me how it happened you found the key inside."

I had seen Hall edge toward the door and had been surprised that Bartley had not prevented him. Hall was nearer the door than any one else and almost before Bartley had finished his sentence, he made a sudden dash from the room. We heard his running footsteps as he rushed for the stairs. The chief gave a leap from his chair, but was stopped by the District Attorney's voice.

"He can't get away. Mr. Bartley had me place men at the end of the stairs."

Even as he spoke, we heard the struggle on the floor below and, in a second, a voice floated up, "We have him."

Some time later Hall was locked in a cell, and from the way he had cursed and sworn, there seemed little doubt we had the right man. But we were not satisfied, there were things we wished Bartley to explain. The air of tension that all had worn was gone and yet, there was a wondering tone in every one's voice.

We took our chairs and the chief voiced the thought of all of us. "Darned if I don't believe

you have the right man, but how in the Devil did you dope it out?"

Bartley laughed, "Never doped it out at all, chief. Blind luck in the end, and the one chance in a million with the pictures."

His voice became more serious. "It came to me to-day, when I discovered that the spring lock on the library door had been broken several weeks before the crime. So long as we assumed the spring lock was all right, then all the murderer had to do when he left the room, was to close the door. The key would naturally be inside. But with the lock broken, the door, to be locked, had to be locked from the outside."

The chief nodded his head to this and Bartley went on:— "Though the windows were open yet it was impossible for one to have walked the ledge and slid down the copper pipe. The storm prevented that. Then the thought struck me, that they said Hall had broken through the door and put his hand in the hole, unlocking the door from the inside."

"But Mr. Bartley," came the chief's voice, "they all said the door was locked."

"Sure they did. It was. But not one of them ever thought to look through the keyhole. All assumed the key was inside. The door was locked but the key was not inside. Hall un-

locked the door, all testified to that. But if he did, he must have had the key. All he did was to put his hand through the hole, place the key in the lock, and open the door. He had the key all the time."

"Good lord!" came the voice of Dunn, "why did I not think of that?"

"Well," laughed Bartley, "all of us slipped up. We all assumed the spring lock was all right. The butler knew it was not but finding the door locked, he naturally assumed it had been locked on the inside. When Hall unlocked that door, he proved he was guilty, for he had to have the key to do it. The door had been locked on the outside."

"But," came the puzzled voice of the chief, "I don't just see when he killed him."

"You remember that he went down to lunch around twenty minutes to twelve. Instead of going down to the kitchen, he went up to the library. You could not tell if he was going up or down, because the elevator made scarcely any noise. Why he went up, I don't know. But he did. As he glanced in the room, he did not notice Rice who must have been at one of the windows. So he enters, peers into the little room which may have had the light on, sees the Aretino and then makes up his mind to take it."

"How did he know what it was?" came the question from Kent.

"That's easily explained, Kent. He heard you men talking of it when you came in the house. Both Wells and Hall went to the library with the butler while you were there. All you men were talking about the book and were looking at it. Billings tells me some one said while they were in, 'Think of this darned thing being worth $30,000.' Hall heard that and saw the book."

He paused for a second, and swept on, "I presume the temptation came to take it. He thought that no one knew he was in the library. So he took it, maybe placed it in his pocket, and Rice, who had seen it all, came in. I believe that just about the time Rice spoke to him, the lights went out and the struggle started. Hall had no idea of killing Rice when he entered, but in a sudden rage and to shut his mouth, struck him down. It only took a moment or so. He then took the box of gold pieces and went down to the kitchen. No one had seen him. Then he went into the cellar and hid the box under the ashes of the furnace. He could get the money at any time. In fact, the night we saw the light in the house, he had taken some of the gold pieces. As for the book, he decided it was a bit more than he could get rid of and placed it behind the

books in the case. But when, I do not know. He could get it some other time if he wished."

The chief had listened, with the air of a man that wished to believe the story, yet was not sure. As Bartley paused, he said, "But will that story of yours convict him? The strongest thing is the spring being broken. But you need more than that for a jury."

Bartley smiled, "True, but you forget the plate that was in the camera. It seems incredible, but on that plate was the likeness of the murderer. Not plain, like a picture, but good enough."

He placed the picture on the table and we crowded to see it. Our heads touched as we bent to look. Bartley had told the truth, when he said the figures were not plain. In fact the picture was more like one of those old-fashioned silhouettes one sees once in a while. There was the faint outline of the window from which the curtain had been pulled down. But there was also the darker shadow of two men, a little apart. The dark outline and that was all. One of the figures was slight. The other heavy and thick-set. And the outline of the heavy, thick-set figure, a mass of blackness upon the picture, was for all that, the figure of a man. A man that had one shoulder standing high above the other. There was no doubt the figure was that of Hall.

For a while we stood silently looking at the

picture. No one spoke. All realized that before us was the thing which would convict the man in the cell two stories below us. It was Bartley's voice that broke the silence.

"There was one thing more, a slight thing, but a link in the chain of evidence. Pelt found the missing book and in the pages, I found a little slip from a cheap brand of chewing tobacco. I find Hall chews that brand."

He paused again and, as he started to wrap up the pictures, said:— "There is no doubt about convicting Hall. His trying to escape is enough in itself. In fact no one else but he could have killed my friend."

We stayed around a while later talking, and as we left, I saw Kent go over to Dunn and shake his hand. Though he had enough to make him angry, yet he was coming clean as they say, and wished to show Dunn he bore no malice. Bartley had to receive the admiring congratulations of the chief and the others, but at last we got away.

For some moments, as we drove out of the town, he said nothing. I was too filled with wonder to talk and for some reason he was silent. It was a beautiful night, the air cool, the stars above bright and clear. As we swept over the top of the hill that gave us the first view of the sea, we saw the ocean a few miles away, shining

under the moon. To my surprise, Bartley stopped the car at the top of the hill. For a while he was silent, then he turned toward me, placing his hand on my shoulder. His voice was almost reverent as he said:—

"Pelt, the sky to-night and the view of the sea, makes me think of that line of Shakespeare's. 'We are such stuff as dreams are made of.'" He paused, and there came a long silence. I knew enough not to speak. Then at last in a low voice, he said:—

"This morning, I was afraid the death of my friend would have to go unavenged. Yet from somewhere, we know not where or how, there came that one little fact which cleared it up. Maybe the stars can answer why, maybe the sea. It's all part of the same thing. But I am more sure than ever, that something plays its part with us. The line I quoted to-day is true."

For the second time that day, I failed to understand. "The line?" I asked.

His hand sank into my shoulder with a friendly pressure Then just as he started the engine again, he said:—

"Yes, that line—

"'Tho it abide a year or two or three
Murder will out, this is my conclusion.'"

THE END